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SIR CHARLES NAPIER'S INDIAN BAGGAGE-CORPS.

REPLY

TO

LIEUT.-COL. BURLTON'S ATTACK.

BY

MAJOR MONTAGU M^C. MURDO,

LATE HEAD OF THE QUARTER-MASTER GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT IN INDIA.

Read this over if you're wise,
If you're not, then read it twice;
If a fool, and in the gall
Of bitterness, read not at all."
Old Title-page

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EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

1850.

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY

GENERAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER, G.C.B.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN INDIA.

SIR,

As your Excellency's follower, and as the late head of the Quarter-Master General's Department in Scinde under your orders, and therefore having seen the formation and working of the Camel Baggage-Corps; I could not read a pamphlet pretending to be an answer to yours on the Camel Baggage-Corps, and written by one Lieut.-Col. Burlton, C.B., of the Company's Service, without contradicting the direct errors and mis-statements contained in his "Few Brief Comments on your Excellency's Letter to Sir John Hobhouse," arising on his part from an apparent ignorance of his profession,—if indeed a Commissary may be called a soldier,—belonging, as he does, to the Civil branch of the army; and hated, as he is, by all that is military.

The confusion which you endeavoured to put an end to, is also congenial to the large fortunes made in the Commissariat Department; for, in proportion as organisation increases, the gains of the

department decrease. It may not be without reason that these gentlemen are against a Baggage Corps! I now dedicate this Pamphlet to your Excellency, in hopes that some day you will read Colonel Burlton's statements, and in mine find a reply.

I have the honour to remain

Your Excellency's faithful Servant,

MONTAGU M^c MURDO,

MAJOR.

INTRODUCTION.

[N offering to the public an exposition of the errors contained in Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton's attack upon General Sir Charles Napier's efforts to improve the Baggage Department of the Indian Army, I feel that I may be accused of having undertaken a work of supererogation.*

The first page of Colonel Burlton's controversial pamphlet will force the reflecting reader to ask himself the questions, who is Sir Charles Napier? and, who is Colonel Burlton?—what has the General done to raise the Colonel's ire, and to call forth an irritation so marked as is here exhibited?—what, in short, are the objects of these two men, in reference to this most important question, as affecting the interests and success of British armies in the field?—and, finally, what are the relative and absolute qualifications of either to justify the expression of decided opinions on so vital a subject?

The reader, of course, being impartial, looks to broad facts alone for answering these very rational questions, and, naturally beginning with the General, he finds—

First, that Sir Charles Napier is one of the most experienced veteran Generals in her Majesty's service, whose

* It may be well here to state, that Sir C. Napier has neither read this paper, nor the pamphlet of Colonel Burlton, which has called it forth.

youth was spent in the care of his Company in moving camps ; whose manhood was passed in the incessant command of regiments, brigades, &c., during their camp movements ; and whose maturer years and higher rank have brought upon him a still heavier responsibility for the health, comfort, security, and efficiency of armies in the field, intrusted to his command.

The reader further finds, that, in the exercise of these progressive responsibilities, throughout his long career, he has been invariably and singularly successful.

That, as a commander, he had become convinced, of what few military men of any experience deny, that the greatest impediment to the movement of an army is its baggage.

That, of all the armies he has ever seen, the Anglo-Indian army, in the field, is the most encumbered, impeded, and perilled by its baggage.

That native Indian armies, with which the Company's troops have to contend, are not so impeded or perilled in this respect as our own.

That the baggage department of the Anglo-Indian army has moved, under all its former commanders, in an unorganised and unmanageable mass, generally about ten times the amount of the army it attended.

That, therefore, in every rational diminution of unnecessary baggage, and in every practicable application of organisation that shall tend to bring its movements under control, must consist the most effectual means of increasing the efficiency of the army to which it is attached.

That, in acting under the foregoing convictions, Sir Charles Napier succeeded in establishing an organised baggage-corps to accompany an army, under his own command, in Scinde.

And, finally, that, after having resigned the command

of that army, his desire to be useful to his country and to his profession, induced him to make public the advantages which he had, practically, found to result from this organised baggage-department.

From such an authority, based upon such grounds, and influenced by such motives as are above described, it was reasonable to expect that every recommendation should have been received with respect, and discussed without evasion, levity, or misrepresentation of the principles or arguments which he has put forth.

Assuredly he could not have anticipated, for his observations on the baggage-department, a more satisfactory reception than they obtained from the public, both civil and military.

Add to this, the unanimous verdict of England, confirmed by his Sovereign and by his great master in war, proclaiming him the fittest commander to conduct the Indian armies through a perilous crisis.

But I am wrong in saying that this glorious verdict was unanimous; there must have been one dissentient voice, in the writer of the pages we are about to review, and the verdict of England must have been wrong if one-hundredth part of Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton's imputations, charges, or conclusions, are correct.

Who, then, is Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton?

By profession he is undoubtedly a Lieutenant-Colonel of Bengal Cavalry, by practice a Commissary. It is but fair to assume that he may have entered the service with every imaginable amount of military ardour, nor is it necessary to investigate the influences that induced him, at an early period of his career, voluntarily to abandon the military branch of his profession, and to adopt that of the Commissariat. With the influences I have nothing to do; with the fact I have, as one mode of testing the

relative value of his opinions on important military points, when contrasted with those of Sir Charles Napier. Assuming, for *one moment only*, and merely for the sake of argument, that the natural talents of General Napier and Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton were originally of precisely the same order, then the value of their respective opinions will be in proportion to the opportunities enjoyed, and the *time* and *energy* applied by each to the practice and study of the particular points at issue between them. Their time and attention for the last thirty years appear to have been devoted to totally different pursuits. The General has, above all other worldly objects, considered, and practised himself in improving, the organisation, the discipline, and the rapid steady movement of troops; and, as is natural to men who pursue any particular objects for a long time, he appears to think, that, proportionately to the respective perfection of contending armies in their discipline, organisation, and power of moving, will be the chance of their success in war, supposing other influential contingencies affecting them to be alike.

The Lieutenant-Colonel Commissary appears to have been employed during this epoch in the accumulation of supplies of food and military stores, as well as in furnishing and superintending the transport of the same, from place to place, by means of heterogeneous and disorganised crowds. Thus, whilst the General has been employed as a strictly military commander, in seeking to improve organisation, discipline, and rapid movement, in the troops under his command, the Lieutenant-Colonel appears to have been perfectly satisfied with things as he found them, in the non-combatant, unorganised and impedimental branch, which he had voluntarily adopted.

There are, no doubt, numerous and cogent reasons that may account for the absence of that stimulus to pro-

gressive improvement, in officers conducting the Commissariat branch of an army.

Amongst these causes are the example of ancient usage, together with the fact that the Commander of an army, and not his chief Commissary, bears the responsibility for those failures and inadequate successes consequent upon the slowness of his movements, although caused by the non-combatant Commissariat department.

Hence we perceive every stimulus to the exertions of the Commander, in seeking for means that shall at once secure his supplies and facilitate the expeditious movements of his troops, but we can discover no such incessant stimulus as regards the Commissariat Officer under him ; and we find, in the case now before us, that this stimulus, thus constantly acting upon the General, had sharpened his invention up to the point, not only of suggesting a plan for diminishing the impedimental effect of the indispensable non-combatant department of an army, but of actually putting his plan into practical operation. The principles upon which his plan is based are those of organisation and discipline, the two grand points to which he attributes his own invariable success in a strictly military career, extending over a period exceeding fifty years. These sound principles enabled him to overthrow, in his last conflicts, armies of brave men out-numbering, about fifteen times, the amount of his own forces, and therefore they are principles that he has every right to sustain ; they are principles which make the distinction between a mob and an army, and which, therefore, every real military man does, and must sustain.

The Commissariat Officer, being military only by name, cannot appreciate these principles. He finds, that at the head of his rabble he may arrive at wealth, nominal military rank, and even honorary distinctions, whilst the

military Commander is perhaps paralysed in his operation, retarded and enfeebled in his movements, prevented from following up his victory, perhaps loses his campaign and his character, to protect this indispensable rabble.

It is quite clear, then, why General Napier should have attached so much importance to an extension of organisation and discipline to the non-combatant branch of his army ; having had, from military experience, a knowledge of the disadvantages or disasters which, in its mob-like state, it was calculated to bring upon his troops, and that for such disasters he, as the Commander, must bear the responsibility.

It is quite clear why the Commissary should not attach so much importance to the subject ; first, because being a Commissary in fact, and a military man only by name, he could not appreciate the subject ; and secondly, because as a Commissary he could not be held responsible for the feeble operations of the army, although created by his own mob.

All these matters are clear enough, but it is not so clear upon what grounds the non-military Commissary, living in Cheltenham, should have felt himself justified in opposing his opinions on purely military points to those of Sir Charles Napier, and in reference to facts which occurred under the General's immediate observation in India : a degree of conceit not more extravagant than would be that of the General venturing to differ with the Commissary as to the qualities or value of an ox or a camel.

It is not so clear either, why, in questioning Sir Charles Napier's military opinions, this non-military officer, with such scanty data and qualifications, should have done so in a tone of witless levity and self-gratulating superiority.

It is not clear why he should have questioned facts or

effects described by honourable men who were present where they occurred, whilst he was himself hundreds or thousands of miles removed from thence.

These latter points are any thing but clear ; and I confess myself utterly at a loss to discover any legitimate reason why a Commissary, enjoying the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, should hug the principle of disorder in his department so closely, as is indicated by the indecent, disrespectful, and intemperate publication now before us, directed as it is against a distinguished General Officer, whose only crime appears to have been an effort to correct that cherished principle of disorder.

It is evident, from a perusal of Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton's comments, that he has not taken the trouble even to make himself acquainted with the groundwork of Sir Charles Napier's plan. It seems to have been sufficient for him to assume any false principles as being those of Sir Charles Napier ; to contradict without scruple, or throw discredit on, all examples that are cited by him, and to treat with gross disrespect the military opinions of a man noted among his countrymen as second only to the great Captain of the age !

The public may judge of the tenor of Colonel Burlton's arguments by the following samples :—

" The labours of his " (Sir Charles Napier's) " mountain in this instance, have produced but a muscicular abortion. * ~ * "

" This was penned hastily, no doubt ; but over-anxiety to make out a case will often produce haste, and haste will as often produce inaccuracy * * * " " That is the moral to Sir Charles' fable ! "

" He " (Sir Charles Napier) " has coloured his picture so highly, and exaggerated the probable benefits to be derived from the employment of a few hundred disciplined camel-men so greatly, that it is not easy to deal with the question with suitable gravity and decorum ! * * * "

" Who can refrain from a smgle (a guffaw would be unmannerly) when he is told of these awkward and ungainly brutes, that (even with their

loads on their backs) they manœuvre, they are manageable, they obey a word of command." And yet, in sober earnest, all this is to be found at page 30 of Sir Charles Napier's pamphlet."

* * * "Sir Charles Napier's proposed baggage-corps is—I will not say a false creation proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain, like Macbeth's air-drawn dagger, but—a visionary scheme, more easy to write about than to realise or mature." * * * *

Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton has, with sufficient assurance, charged Sir Charles Napier, with having in his work contemplated reducing the private baggage of the subaltern officers and men of the Indian army, and with having called them "*Sylbarites*."

Both charges are utterly without foundation. Sir Charles Napier, on the contrary, provided an *increase* to the subaltern's carriage, equal to one-third of his original allowance, and which Colonel Burlton himself, with singular inconsistency, says is "liberal." Such a proceeding is surely no evidence of a contemplated reduction!

Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton, however, with infinite ingenuity and palpable misrepresentation, continues throughout his work to harp upon the preposterous idea of reducing the private baggage of a poor subaltern or soldier, and paints a picture, sufficiently exaggerated, of all he possesses on the march. But he carefully abstains from any allusion to *his own class*—Commissary-Generals, Generals of Divisions, and others of high rank, except where he attempts to laugh down as absurd a well-authenticated fact stated by Sir Charles Napier, of a general officer having demanded rations for no less than sixty private servants on the Sutlej campaign.

By dilating on the straitened means of the one class, and omitting all mention of the other, Colonel Burlton doubtless reckoned upon enlisting the sympathies of the whole army of India against Sir Charles Napier.

The charge of calling the officers of the Indian army

“*Sybarites*,” is as unfounded as it is malicious, alluding to the above-mentioned fact of the general officer and the sixty servants, and to the tendency of officers of that class to take the field, as if they were going on some pic-nic or pleasure excursion, with huge double-poled tents, glass doors, troops of servants, &c. Sir Charles Napier says, “No man takes the field for comfort; he goes to win renown, and no Sybarite wins renown in war.” And this is the only application of the term I can find in his work. He considers individuals taking the field in such state unworthy of the Indian army, for which he has so great a regard, and to whom “he offers a proof of his desire to be useful, by recommending a system which, though diminishing their luxuries, would increase and secure their real comforts in the field, and add to their means of acquiring more renown for great deeds in war.” He had not then “any better way of expressing his admiration of their courage and discipline, and his affection for them generally.”

Beyond remarking on a few individual absurdities of people high in office or rank, Sir Charles Napier lays no stress whatever upon the reduction of *private* baggage; it is absolutely insignificant in comparison with the grand objects of his plan, which are,

1st, *To lighten the loads of all animals*,* and to bring them to a classified standard weight.

2ndly, *To organise the whole* into masses, capable of being controlled in their movements, and to secure their possessing a certain degree of discipline. These ends are to be effected by the most simple and practical means.

The importance of a military baggage-corps is not confined to the military service. The following extracts from

* Whether public or private, that take their places on the line of march

papers submitted to Government by Mr. Hamilton, of the Bengal Civil Service, will show the oppression and inconveniences suffered by the mercantile and agricultural population of India, from the want of such an establishment.

The view taken by Mr. Hamilton, in his able advocacy of the principle of a baggage-corps purely for the benefit of the agricultural classes, has always been fully appreciated by Sir Charles Napier, although he has not dwelt upon it in his pamphlet

And it is very curious to observe the close similarity in the remedies proposed by Sir Charles Napier and Mr. Hamilton ; the object of the one being to remove the most serious impediment to our military operations ; that of the other, to alleviate the sufferings of our industrial population, caused by the pressing of carriage on every movement of troops. This latter inconvenience will be obvious when one considers that the agriculturist is forced to give his cattle from the plough, and forego the prospects of a harvest, to follow the camp ; with a tolerable certainty, at the same time, of being in the end bullied and cheated of his hire. Mr. Hamilton seeks to relieve this oppression, by the formation of a Baggage-Corps of Mules, similar in principle to the Baggage-Corps of Camels in Scinde.

The reader will be able to form some idea of the universal benefit which the adoption of such a system is calculated to produce among the agricultural class in India, by the following extracts from Mr. Hamilton's letter to Government (dated May, 1842) :—

“ I believe I may safely say that a notice of the intended march of a regiment from any station strikes dismay among the agricultural as well as the mercantile community, except, perhaps, at one or two of the largest cantonments or cities in the upper provinces.

“ The difficulty that exists of procuring carriage cannot be conceived but by those who have had the task to perform ; having myself been the magistrate at some of the principal military stations, I have had

much experience, and I have on all occasions endeavoured to introduce something like a system.

"One of the causes of the difficulty in procuring carts for troops, even where they are to be had for hire, arises from the want of any fixed rule or system, by which the owner and soldier shall be guided.

"There are as many owners who would resort to any means to escape accompanying troops as there may be bad or difficult paymasters for carriage supplied.

"It is to be regretted that a Baggage Corps of Mules is not in existence; such an organised body would relieve the country from the oppression now inflicted in pressing carriage, and which injures very often the prospects of an industrious family, by depriving the husbandman of the services of his bullocks at a time when by their use he might raise a crop sufficient to maintain his household during the year as well as to enable him to pay his rent.

"The Indian Army can never be considered thoroughly efficient until it be able to move freely and independently at a short notice, and have an equipment of carriage that will accompany it into all quarters, without the power to check its progress by refusing to advance.

"Hitherto, camels and bullocks have been the baggage animals on which the movements of our troops have depended. The former are excellent, but the latter are unfitted for distant marches; besides, they are chiefly drawn from the agricultural community, so that every *move* of troops is nearly certain of causing much discontent, great local inconvenience, and actual loss. This was clearly proved by the deficiency in the returns of the Delhi Custom House, caused by the movement of the Army of the Indus," (in 1838).

"The formation of a Baggage Train seems to offer the only means of obtaining for the Army an efficient system of transport.

"But the great point that would be gained by adopting mules is the necessity that officers and men would be under to adapt their baggage to this mode of transport; at present, when a hackery (cart) is the vehicle, the dimensions and quantity of baggage is not considered; a Sepoy thinks his chest, his box, any bag of pots and pans, if not his charpoy (bedstead) can go on a hackery! to economise *space* never enters his thoughts; a mule will carry 120 seers (240 lbs.); a Sepoy is allowed 10 seers (20 lbs.); a mule would then carry the baggage of 12 Sepoys. Space must be economised, boxes and chests must be discarded, that which will go in a panier or kujawar must be the guide as to dimensions, and thus the Sepoy will be led to bring his baggage into the smallest space, *to the great comfort of the troops themselves.*

"On service the mules *must be loaded and arranged by the muleteers*, each one will see his animal properly packed, and when loaded he will proceed at once to the spot for assembly, and march with the baggage train, keeping pace with the regiment, and not, as is the case with

camels or carts, be obliged to precede the troops by hours and arrive hours after."

I have quoted enough from Mr. Hamilton's papers to show the efficient remedy he proposed for existing distress in the country, resulting from the movements of troops.

Mr. Hamilton has never served as a military man ; yet the accuracy of his ideas upon military subjects contrasts most strongly with the deficiency in that respect of the Lieut.-Colonel Commissary ! who ought to have been thoroughly aware of the impediments which the present system produces in war, and who cannot possibly have been ignorant of the suffering that it throws upon the inhabitants, or of the obstacles that it opposes to the improvement and prosperity of the country.

It is absolutely impossible that a Commissary, of any standing in India, could have been ignorant of the effect of the present principle of military transport upon the civil population. No one could have exposed with more effect its crushing tendency, and its disastrous consequences, in this respect, than the head of the department whose duty it was to cause the cultivator to abandon his ordinary occupations for the temporary necessities of Government, in the transport of military stores. No one else could have given so good a history of the distances from which men and animals are brought, at loss and inconvenience ; of the delays and disappointments to which they are subjected ; of the consequent neglect of the agricultural crops, and of the irremediable injury thus imposed on large classes of the people.

The practice in England of bringing a strong horse with a cart, capable of carrying a ton of stores, from a very short distance, and paying well for the labour, which lasts but for a single day, gives no idea of the Indian practice with the vast derangements it produces, when five

or six animals, bullocks or mules, must be collected from a widely scattered population to execute the labour of one English horse; the enormous numbers thus collected being forced from their homes, sometimes for many hundred miles, and for two or more years at a time!

This branch of the subject has been but slightly touched on by Sir Charles Napier, because he was only treating the military part of the question, and in that alone he showed sufficient grounds for the adoption of his plans; but its discussion ought not to have been omitted by Colonel Burlton, before giving his general condemnation of Sir Charles Napier's project.

I would ask Colonel Burlton most pointedly, to explain how he can have written a book to impede a change in the present tyrannical system of army-baggage transport in India, without ever once alluding to its bearing on the rural population. Will he pretend to be ignorant of the fact that it is cruelly oppressive? That it would not be permitted, for one moment, to exist amongst a free people? That it is calculated to alienate the affections of the Indian nation from the British Government? His experience, during thirty years, as a Commissary must have convinced him that he was not only a "head camel-driver," as he names himself, but, what is infinitely more despicable, a "head slave-driver;" that the mainspring of his trade, which he exercised for those thirty years, and which he now clings by with convulsive energy, was gross unvarnished "slave-driving," by which he was permitted to seize every cart, bullock, and camel, with their drivers, that he met, load them, *nolens volens*, and force them to go wherever he directed, for as long as he pleased. This trade, my good Colonel, cannot go under your innocent name of "camel-driving:" it is most culpable "slave-driving." For the existence of this guilty practice

you were not responsible in the early part of your career, as you were then a mere subordinate tool employed to carry a certain share of it into execution ; and, so far, any criticism against you can only affect your pretensions to good taste. Not so, however, when you had reached the first office in the department, with a seat in that all-powerful body the Military Board, where, had the desire been present in your mind, the position you held would have enabled you to apply the required remedy. But even at this point of your career, in charity, one is willing to exempt you from such a heavy imputation, by supposing for a moment that you may have had every good wish, but were overpowered by your colleagues. Alas ! for your condemnation, however, out comes your damning Cheltenham pamphlet, proving you the voluntary slave-driver from first to last—the active promoter and perpetuator of this horrible anti-English slavery.

The officers of the noble Indian army are better informed than to say, with Colonel Burlton, “ what we have done before we can do again.” They know that times and systems have changed in India, as well with our enemies as ourselves. They know that the mode of warfare is widely different from that of former times ; that our enemies have rapidly learnt from us our tactics ; that they have adopted from us all that is efficient and good in arms and equipment, and rejected all that is useless and cumbrous. An Indian campaign is no longer a matter of one good fight, a siege, or a warfare of detachments, lightly equipped, flying over the country, but a series of skilful manœuvres of armies *en masse*, in which, too, the British have not lately taken the initiative, but have had enough to do to follow and to frustrate them.

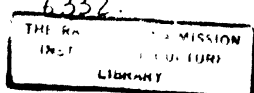
The magnificent *matériel* of our army is the same as of yore : its valour is the same, but its discipline is impaired ;

while our enemies have acquired discipline in which they were formerly entirely deficient. A gallant officer, who was prisoner in the late campaign, told me that the march of the Sikh army from the neighbourhood of Chillianwalla to Goojerat was one of the best executed and most magnificent manœuvres he ever witnessed. Drawn up in order of battle, facing the British camp, Shere Sing first passed his baggage well to the reverse flank of his intended march; he then commenced his march, preserving his order of battle, every battalion keeping its place and alignment for a distance of twenty miles! So perfectly was the order of battle preserved, that the British captive believed our army must have been marching close and parallel to that of the Sikhs, instead of being, as it was on that day, quietly in camp at Chillianwalla!

On approaching Goojerat the Sikh army halted, reformed line facing to the rear, and remained in this attitude till the baggage had passed to the front, and the camp was pitched. Now, when 60,000 men, with sixty pieces of cannon, can be manœuvred in front of a British army in this fashion, it is time for us to rouse ourselves, renew our former discipline, and shake off the unwieldy incumbrances that clog our movements in the field, the very sight of which, on the march, is sufficient to appal the ablest commander; for (as Colonel Burlton acknowledges) "it is no wonder that a general stands aghast, and fervently hopes his enemy may not detach any light horse to double round his flanks and fall upon his rear."

Let us profit, therefore, by the warning the late campaigns in India have given us,—profit also by the warning which the new era in India will give us: I allude to the introduction of railways. I cannot separate from my mind the conviction, that, however beneficial to the mercantile and social communities of India, the development

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of this grand scheme may be, railways will have the effect, ere long, of bringing together the different races in India, from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas. They will know each other's sentiments for the first time, and for the first time understand the meaning of *combination*. There is nothing to fear if we are prepared, but *everything* to fear if we are unprepared.

Finally, let the army ever keep in mind the words of its best friend, Sir Charles Napier,—“The army of India is in every way worthy of the vast empire it won and holds—holds by DISCIPLINE !

“Let not, then, the word become an empty boast. Let it not lose its *reality*. Let not victory lull our soldiers to sleep. Let every British officer recollect that powerful nations surround our Indian empire ; that they are rapidly acquiring our military system, our tactics, our arms. Let him compare our earlier battles with our last—Plassy with Ferozshuhur and Sobraon ; setting our losses in killed and wounded at each battle in juxtaposition. Let us look to these matters, that we may not have to exclaim, with Pyrrhus at Aesculum, ‘*Another such victory will undo us*’ ”

REMARKS.

IN the 4th paragraph of what Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton calls "the pith and marrow of Sir C. Napier's argument," viz. —

"That as the climate renders a *great deal* of baggage *necessary*, care must be taken not to reduce it to too low a scale; and that, as in India luxuries and necessaries are near akin, the line which divides them is to be drawn with much care —"

Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton says :—

"In all this there is little but a series of see-saw vague truisms, and I cannot but wonder that such ineffectual common-places should have proceeded from Sir Charles Napier's powerful pen."

IN Colonel Burlton's verdict of truisms against Sir Charles Napier, every reader will concur. His whole book consists of truisms so clear and plain, that it is a disgrace to any officer, long in charge of the Commissariat department, to which those truisms refer, and who has acted as a member of the all-powerful Military Board, that these truisms are as applicable to the present day as to by-gone times. It is much to be regretted that in reviewing the Lieutenant-Colonel Commissary's production, it is impossible to convict the author of truisms.

"It might," pursues our Commissary, "with equal

perspicuity have been said, that the troops *ought to have* no more than they *ought to have* ! a truism which no one will be bold enough to dispute."

I repeat, it is to be wished that Colonel Burlton could be criticised for putting forth truisms ; and I might have been spared the trouble of framing this exposition, for the purpose of fixing on himself those "fallacies and crudities" which he has presumed to impute to Sir Charles Napier.

I confess to viewing Sir Charles Napier's reflections on the constitution of the baggage of an Indian army, as most considerate and humane, and as giving a warrant in the outset of his undertaking, of the caution and wisdom with which any reduction in baggage would be considered before being proposed by him.

The six axiomatic paragraphs, which Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton has framed, are not, as he supposes, the "*pith and marrow*" of Sir Charles Napier's argument. The pith and marrow of Sir Charles Napier's argument are, that the present disorganised mode of transporting the baggage, endangers the existence of the army to which it is attached, and deprives the officers and men of those essential comforts, with which they should be supplied to insure their health and efficiency ; and that the remedy for this grievous evil can only be found in applying a system of discipline and organisation to the baggage department, which has already been found to be successful in every other branch of our army.

"The real question, however," says Colonel Burlton, "is what is *necessary*, and what is *unnecessary* ; and this, Sir Charles has not solved ; nor is it easy for any one to do so." The question *was* solved at Hyderabad, in 1843, by a committee of able and experienced officers of the Indian army, assembled by order of Sir C. Napier, and the amount of baggage was regulated for both officers and men, as

laid down in pages 37 and 38 of Sir Charles Napier's pamphlet.

It was solved also, as far as regards private soldiers, by a committee of general and other officers, assembled at the Head Quarters of the army, in 1847 ; and Sir Charles Napier himself gives a hint, in page 39, of what an officer's baggage in the field should be. But the broad line of distinction between what is *necessary* and what is *unnecessary*, is more easily drawn than Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton supposes.

Is it *necessary*, for instance, that a single regiment on field service should have two hundred dozens of beer ? This was the case with one of H.M.'s regiments at *Cabool* ! That enormous quantity was brought as far as Peshawur, and they actually succeeded in getting one hundred and fifty dozens of it through the Khyber Pass ! And let me remind the reader, that this was at the time mentioned by Mr. Hamilton of the civil service, when the country was racked and distressed to find carriage for the army.

Is it *necessary* for a regiment to have with it, throughout a campaign, an abundant supply of champagne and other wines ? This was the case in the last campaign with one of H.M.'s regiments, when encamped at Chillianwalla.

Is it *necessary* for the Commander-in-Chief and the General Staff of the army to have, on a campaign, for the former, two enormous double-poled dinner tents,* each capable of accommodating a party of sixty or seventy people, and each requiring four elephants to carry them ; four tents for sitting or sleeping in, each about 36 feet long by 22 feet broad, divided into three rooms, and requiring two elephants each for their conveyance, or the host of smaller tents, such as kitchen, stable, or servants' tents ? Yet all this is *ordered* by government, to be pro-

* I quote Colonel Burlton's own description of this equipage.

vided for a Commander-in-Chief when in the field ; with a supply, in proportion, to each officer of his staff !—and it was only by the express sanction of government, that this most expensive and cumbrous camp could be reduced lately to soldier-like dimensions at the earnest request of Sir C. Napier.

Are glass-doors for double-poled tents *necessary* ? I am told that a gallant officer carried about these cumbrous affairs throughout the campaign in Afghanistan, 1000 miles from India.

These (and many others I could name) are the salient points of reduction that Sir Charles Napier would attack : he finds fault with the *system* which allows of such absurdities ; but neither the soldier's baggage, nor that of the junior officer, has been reduced by him. On the contrary, their comforts (which in India are necessities) have been *extended* and secured to them, by the system of organisation which he introduced for the regulation of baggage in the field.

The fifth proposition of Sir Charles Napier,—viz. “ That all private baggage should be carried by the public,”—is, in Colonel Burlton's opinion, “ open to most serious objections.” That officer asserts,—

“ The measure proposed would be unpleasant and inconvenient in its operation, and would lead to constant mistakes and confusion of property. There would be continual jangling and quarrelling, too, between the public camel-drivers and the private servants of the officer, and the property of the latter would be stolen, or lost, without chance or hope of recovery, with no one on whom the responsibility would rest.”

There could not possibly be a more erroneous view taken of the subject than the above.

I speak from experience in the actual working of Sir Charles Napier's system. The measure proved to be most *pleasant* and *convenient* in its operation, and PREVENTED

mistakes and confusion of property. There was neither *jangling nor quarrelling* between the public camel-drivers and the private servants, because the latter were not allowed to interfere *in any way whatever* with the former, from the time the baggage was ready to be packed till it was unloaded.

“SCINDE GENERAL ORDER,
9th January, 1846.

“It is to be clearly understood that no one but the officer in command of the troops is, on any pretence whatever, to interfere with, or to give any orders to, the baggage-master, quarter-master, or their assistants, under whom the whole baggage is placed, &c.

“If any officer or non-commissioned officer in command of baggage misconducts himself, the officer in command of the brigade, regiment, or detachment, is to take the proper steps in regard to him, as usual, for the due maintenance of military discipline, &c.

“It is positively prohibited to servants, or to any persons with the baggage, to beat or hurry on camels, or to disobey *the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the baggage corps*, who are to have the entire command of the baggage on the line of march.”

It is scarcely necessary for me to add, that Sir Charles Napier's orders were obeyed. Nor was the property of officers or of any one stolen or lost “without chance or hope of recovery,” because the camel-drivers were enlisted men, who had the same interest in behaving well as the sepoys of the line had.

Again :—

“SCINDE GENERAL ORDER,
24th November, 1845.

“When animals fail from any other cause than disobedience of orders, the baggage is to be immediately taken care of, and spare camels furnished. The honour of the corps would be compromised by loss of baggage, even the smallest quantity, when orders have been obeyed by the proprietors.

“Officers' servants are strictly to comply with all orders issued by the officers and non-commissioned officers of the baggage corps.

“The Provost Marshal's deputy is to attend the commandant of the baggage corps in the field.”

During my service in Scinde, at the head of the Quarter-

Master-General department, several complaints (and bitter ones too) reached me regarding the surplus baggage of overloaded animals having been left on the road ; but the individuals who suffered these losses were made fully aware beforehand that such would be the inevitable consequence of *disobeying* the rules of the baggage corps, and it was only the bounden duty of the baggage corps to enforce the observance of these rules.

But I have no recollection of any complaints having been made that property was stolen or lost when under the charge of the baggage corps. On the contrary, a greater feeling of security existed.

The following extract from a letter published by Sir Charles Napier, from the late gallant and lamented Colonel Pennycuik, then commanding a brigade in the Scinde army, to Major Jameson, commanding the baggage corps, will serve to show the results of the actual working of the system introduced by Sir Charles Napier :—

“ I, for one, have had this opportunity ; and when I compare the trouble, the anxiety, the expense, and *the loss* experienced in the conveyance of baggage of officers and soldiers by private camels during the campaign in Afghanistan and Beloochistan, in the year 1839, with the comfort attending the conveyance of the baggage to Bhawalpore and back, the comparison is, in every respect, greatly in favour of the baggage corps. Nothing, indeed, could have been more regular or more satisfactory than the manner in which the baggage of the brigade under my command was conveyed on the latter occasion : no trouble, no anxiety, and far less expense, taking into consideration the purchase and feeding of camels, the attendance required, and the *constant* losses occurring from one cause or another.”

After seeking to vitiate Sir Charles Napier's six axioms, which he fails to do, Colonel Burlton says,—“ The sixth and last proposition on the proposed baggage corps is evidently Sir Charles Napier's pet child,”—which he (Colonel Burlton) calls “ a museipular abortion ;” and says, that “ from the first the success of the baggage

corps was more than doubted by those best acquainted with the subject," and that "time and experience have stamped it as a failure."

I must throw back Colonel Burlton's four fallacies and crudities on his own head.

1st. The baggage corps was not Sir Charles Napier's pet child: his pet child was the correction of the gross abuses that exist in the present disorganised chaos of Indian army baggage,—conducted as that is by the Commissariat, of which Colonel Burlton was so long the most influential member as Commissary-General, and member of the all-powerful Military Board.

This chaotic system, which endangers the existence of every army in the field, and grievously impedes our military progress and movements, is assuredly the "pet child" and the adopted child of this Chief Commissary, who has so long fostered its weakness, and with a maternal partiality still admires its vices,—which Sir Charles has dared to attack. But this maternal partiality ought not to carry the Commissary the lengths to which he goes when dealing with his neighbours. It ought not to lead him into the inexcusable error of mis-stating the principles or motives of Sir Charles Napier, whose chief object was the correction of this frightful and dangerous disorganisation, by the best means that any open-minded man could suggest. The formation of a baggage corps appeared to him the best and most efficient means that he could devise to attain that end; but he was at the same time always anxious to receive the suggestions of every other man of experience, and for this reason he called upon all commanders of brigades and regiments in his army to aid him. The reports of these officers were, without exception, in favour of the baggage corps. Sir Charles had, therefore, a right to adopt his own plan as likely to prove efficient.

2nd. It was not a muscicular abortion, but a most healthy production. (See letters from Colonels Pennycuik, Blood, &c.)

3rd. I will readily admit that the success of the baggage corps in Scinde "was more than doubted" by two classes of men—those who knew *most*, and those who knew *least* of the subject; the first class being the Commissariat themselves, who profit by the vices attendant on the present disorganised system; and the second, their ignorant dupes, who, blinded by prejudice, and ignorant of war, condemned what they did not understand. But the mass of the army are thoroughly convinced of the delinquencies of the Commissariat department, of its grievous inefficiency, and of the urgent necessity for a more efficient system of transport than at present exists in the army in India.

4th. Time and experience, which test all things, have stamped the baggage corps *not* as a *failure*, but as *successful*. No one will doubt this who looks to the authority of such men as Lieut.-Colonels Pennycuik, MacPherson, Derinzy, Reid, Corsellis, Blood, &c. &c.,—all able and experienced commanders in war, having tested its efficiency *in the field*. Nor will their verdict in its favour be materially impugned by the hostile opinion of Colonel Burton, sustained only by such experience as he could obtain in a Cheltenham campaign.

Extract from a letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Blood, dated

"CAMP, PESHAWUR, 1st May, 1849.

"Throughout the march no government property was lost; nor has any report been made to me of any loss having been sustained by the failure of the animals in the conveyance of private baggage.

"I may here add, that during the campaign in Afghanistan in 1841-42, when in command of a battery, the carriage was provided by the Commissariat department, and the greatest inconvenience was then

frequently experienced by the *loss of property*, and from irregularity in the arrival of the baggage; circumstances which I, in a great degree, attribute to the want of attention to the camels, *together with their being overloaded, and driven at a quicker rate than these animals should be allowed to travel at.* In the baggage corps the above evils are obviated by the responsibility which attaches to the men in charge.

(Signed)

"C. BLOOD, *Lieut.-Colonel,*
"Commanding 3rd Troop Horse Artillery"

The conduct and success of the baggage corps in the late campaign are remarkable, because this most useful corps had much to contend with from its birth; and after Sir Charles Napier left Scinde, a positive order was given by the Bombay Government, that *no casualties occurring either among the men or camels in the corps* were to be filled up!

It is indeed wonderful how the corps has managed to struggle on under such auspices! The many excellent native commissioned and non-commissioned officers, who volunteered into the baggage corps from regiments of the line, with a view to obtaining promotion, have been cruelly disappointed. Yet the good conduct and success of the corps in the recent campaign must be owing to these excellent soldiers, as well as to the admirable system under which the corps was organised; and which is not confined in its operation to the corps alone, but extends its influence throughout the whole of the incongruous masses forming the baggage of an Indian army.

In writing of the services of the corps in the late campaign, the officer commanding observes,—

"We had necessarily a large number of hired camels, but as soon as hired, immediately placed under officers and men of the corps; the regulations and system extended to them, and the advantages of the discipline were manifest."

Brigadier the Hon. Sir Henry Dundas, in mentioning the utility of the remnant of the corps, even in its crippled

condition, states in his despatch, that "the baggage moved in the prescribed order of march, and has always been well up, and certain advantages have undoubtedly been derived from it, which would not have been experienced if the camels had been under the control of the Commissariat. *From the reduced state of the corps*" (says this officer), "*and the men having been but imperfectly armed, all the advantages contemplated in its first organisation have not been realised.*"

I should think not ! The corps was "*imperfectly armed*," and no casualties occurring either among the men or camels were allowed to be filled up for twelve months previous. Yet here we have the officer commanding the division of Bombay troops in the late war (and who, I think, at one time was among those who doubted the practicability of the system of the baggage corps) reporting most favourably of the working of *its mere shadow* !

Why was the corps "*imperfectly armed*" in war ? and why was it sent on a campaign in a "*reduced state* ?" They who ordered the corps to be suppressed imagined themselves greater masters in war than he whose genius had directed its formation !

I hope I have now stated enough to show that Colonel Burlton's assertion, viz., that "*time and experience, which test all things, have stamped the baggage corps as a failure*," is incorrect ; that, although this most useful corps was not permitted to be brought to maturity, the *very principles of its system*, when set in motion, worked marvellously throughout the *entire* baggage which accompanied the Bombay division in the late campaign.

At page 6, Colonel Burlton endeavours to throw ridicule on Sir C. Napier for supposing 20,000 camels marched in a string.

"He (Sir C. Napier) overshoots his mark by trying to prove too

much, and evincing too strong a desire to make out a case. For instance, Sir Charles knows very well that 20,000 camels would never be marched, as he depicts or supposes them, in one long line of fifty miles."

Sir Charles's meaning is here entirely *misrepresented*, but probably not *misunderstood* by Lieut.-Colonel Burlton ; there is no overshooting the mark, or desire evinced to "make out a case ;" his object is clearly to impress upon his reader the immense space occupied by each camel and its load ; he adopts a simple mode of conveying this idea. He says,—

"Let us suppose 20,000 camels that, being led, as is the usual way in the East, by a string fastened through the nostril of one animal, and tied to the tail of his leader, these 20,000 camels occupy about fifty miles, allowing five yards from the nose of one animal to the nose of his follower, &c.

"This shows the reader what an enormous affair is the baggage of an Indian army, because, *though it does not march in so regular a train as I have just described*, yet, place the animals as you will, the encumbrance of this unwieldy mass is immense, for the animals and their burdens must have room."

All this is really so simple and plain, that it is difficult to exculpate Colonel Burlton from the charge of wilful misrepresentation of Sir C. Napier's meaning.

But I will adopt, for the sake of argument, Colonel Burlton's literal view of the case, and maintain, that, in a very considerable proportion of the marches in India, the camels are obliged to follow in single file, and that, literally, it has often happened that many of the camels had not quitted the old camp when the leading camels had arrived on the new ground. In the operations in Affghanistan the baggage animals could not go otherwise than in single file. In Scinde also, enclosed as it is with jungle, and intersected by canals, the same order was almost invariably necessary. When the battle of Hyderabad had begun, six miles from the camp, the baggage was not all clear of the

old ground. In all enclosed countries, where operations are carried on, the march of the baggage must be in single file. Viewing the subject, therefore, in the light in which Colonel Burlton has chosen to place it, it is *not* the fact, that Sir Charles "makes his giant first, and then slays him, or shows that he ought to be slain;" all he has stated is critically correct, the result of experience and keen observation.

In page 7, Lieut.-Colonel Burlton more than doubts the possibility of order being introduced into the march of baggage. He says :—

"Let me ask, can any one suppose that all this hubbub and confusion would be quelled or prevented,—all those sprawling, overloaded, dying, unfortunates be revived, restored to order and propriety, by the mere admixture among them of 1800 others, ridden or led by men wearing red or blue jackets, and carrying percussion carabines?"

I answer, Yes! most assuredly, provided that those men in red or blue jackets be trained and disciplined under the rules prescribed by Sir C. Napier; but without the addition of the General's favourite principle of organisation and order, the 1800 additional red or blue jackets would only tend to increase the Commissariat darling principle of chaos and disorder. Here again we find our critic Commissary wilfully seeking to misinterpret his author, and to mislead his reader. He must have known right well when he wrote this that the colour of the jacket on the camel-men could but be analogous to the uniform of the soldiers in a regiment, and that discipline and organisation would make the camel-man, as it does the soldier, manageable and obedient. In the next place, Colonel Burlton could have told his reader that what Sir C. Napier insisted upon as a first principle in the system was, the effectual *prevention* of "overloading," consequently there are no "sprawling, overloaded, dying, unfortunates to be

revived, or restored to order and propriety." Sir C. Napier had repeatedly informed Colonel Burlton, that on this same *overloading* hinges the greater portion of this hubbub and confusion, "and is the cause" (as the Commissary describes it) of these "shouts of men" and "resounding of sticks." Overloading, indeed, is the foundation of nearly all disorganisation in the baggage of an army. All overloaded animals, especially such as are weak, must of necessity lag in the rear; it is impossible that they can keep pace with stronger or more lightly laden camels, unless urged beyond their powers of endurance, when they are sure to fail altogether, and their loads are either abandoned, or else added to the burdens of others already overladen! I have seen this frequently happen. One instance is recorded by Sir Charles Napier. In the hill campaign, the Commissary-General on one occasion reported that 500 camels with their drivers had deserted during the previous night, and on the General inquiring of him what had been done with the loads belonging to those animals, he was told that they had been divided among the remaining camels! Now, according to the regulations of the baggage corps, loads are fixed at a standard weight of 320 lbs. of private baggage to each camel; and any animal (no matter whether it be public or private property) that takes its place on the line of march, comes under the orders of the baggage corps; the consequence is, that *all* being equally loaded, move together at a regular pace; there is no straggling, no lagging to the rear, no "sprawling or overloaded animals," which Colonel Burlton truly describes as the rule in his favourite system; and here I must not fail to congratulate the Commissary on this second proof of his veracity! confirming it by my own testimony, as I have seen on the line of march camels laden with 750 lbs. weight!

In the second place, the admixture of officers and men of the baggage corps with their camels, amongst the mass of unorganised camels and their drivers, is as the leaven to the bread. Suppose that the 6000 Government camels (which Colonel Burlton says are permanently maintained in Bengal) were formed into three baggage corps of 2000 in each, and that 24,000 camels were required to take the field, to every three camels which Government would have to hire or purchase for the campaign, there would be a drilled man of the baggage corps attached, with his camel, bringing with him to those three camels and their drivers systematic order in loading, unloading, moving to the right or left on the march, grazing, and guarding. The baggage corps' private with his camel takes the lead in the string, the others *must* follow; he, again, is directed by his officers; and thus organisation is effected *at once*, and the whole 24,000 or 30,000 move on in perfect order and security from the beginning.

It is idle to argue that these baggage corps would be costly. The extra charge to Government, which would be incurred by turning 6000 Government camels with their present establishments into three baggage corps, would soon be far more than covered by efficiency of transport, security from loss of property and animals, comfort and health to the troops, and saving to troops of the line, in performing the duties of baggage and grazing guards. To detail the enormous unnecessary cost which Government incurs with every war in India would require a chapter on each of the points I have mentioned above. In nine cases out of ten, where our military operations have been weak and incomplete, the causes have been traced to *inefficient transport*. The loss of property, both public and private, even in our most successful wars in India, is always immense, while that of baggage animals is notorious.

Who can doubt that the comfort of having tents and provisions always well up with the soldiers on the march, instead of their having to wait four and five hours for both, is productive of health, and that the health of troops is real economy, cost what it may ? Finally, the baggage corps, in releasing several battalions from the duties of guarding the baggage of an army on the march would either enable the Commander to add those battalions to the general line of battle, or effect a great saving to the State, by dispensing with their services in the field altogether.

The “ *red or blue jackets*,” which the Lieutenant-Colonel Commissary cavils at so much in various parts of his comments, are a simple part of the system of organisation. The use of distinguishing colours in war, is as old as war itself ; and denying the utility of them, is merely one more proof of Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton’s total ignorance of the principles of military organisation !

Having a uniform colour, for each division of baggage, is as natural and simple a method of enabling every camp-follower to recognise and follow his own division, as of a soldier to recognise his regiment. Indeed, the necessity for uniforms in the baggage corps is even more important than for the regular soldier, because the difficulty for the camp-follower to keep in his proper place is so much greater. Thus, a division of baggage marching in its prescribed order, under the command of officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the baggage corps, is capable of defending itself, of moving in any required direction, of keeping pace with the troops, and arriving with them in camp ; and not according to Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton’s “ *helter-skelter* ” system of getting in as best it may. Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton is wrong in supposing that these uniforms are an expense to the State :

the men of the Scinde baggage corps paid for their own uniforms. Nor are they expensive, for they are made of the coarse country cloths of Scinde, and can be had just as cheap of one colour as another.

But to pursue the Lieutenant-Colonel Commissary's criticism :—

“ Again, I would ask, referring to the passage of the Tussoo defile, mentioned at the same page, can Sir Charles really believe, that if his baggage had been carried on that occasion by a baggage corps, or by camels conducted by armed men instead of by *sans-culotte* Surwans, it would have made a saving of some four or five hours out of seven or eight? This was penned hastily, no doubt; but over-anxiety to make out a case will often produce haste, and haste will as often produce inaccuracy.”

Here is a grave imputation, indeed, and I am free to admit that either the General or the Commissary has undoubtedly sought to “ make out a case.” The reader will perhaps take the trouble of deciding which is the guilty man; the General, who earnestly sought to introduce order into a chaotic branch of the Commissariat department, which had ruined the operations, and destroyed the character of many a good general before him, and who could only be interested in a *bondâ fide* improvement of the system, independent of all making out of cases; or the Colonel Commissary, who had been for years sitting over the department interfered with, and derived his emolument from it without ever thinking of a change. The mortification that a man might naturally feel, in finding broad changes recommended in the management of a department over which he had recently and long presided, might plead some excuse for irritation, but certainly not for one-tenth part of the unfounded and indecent imputations contained in Colonel Burlton's pages.

Sir C. Napier's paragraph was not penned hastily, nor is there the slightest inaccuracy in the statement. All who were at Tussoo on that day will remember how the

defile was *choked* with baggage, unable to move either backwards or forwards. Staff-officers were unable to take orders, and all was confusion and delay, owing to the irregular manner in which the mass of baggage had rolled into the pass before it had been rendered practicable by the pioneers, and hours elapsed before the pressure could be relieved. The troops did not arrive in camp till noon, and Major-General Simpson, who made a detour with the cavalry and guns to avoid the defile, did not arrive till *evening*.

Let Colonel Burlton remember, that when the baggage and followers choked the pass of Jugdulluck, and rendered unavailing the discipline and bravery of our troops, the delay to these brave men was not merely four or five hours, as at Tussoo,—it was eternal !

Suppose that a theatre were crowded, the gallery with an unruly disorganised mob, the pit with drilled and disciplined soldiers, and that an alarm of fire was raised, which does Colonel Burlton suppose would be soonest cleared of its occupants,—the pit or the gallery ? It is discipline, and *discipline alone*, that will enable baggage, as well as troops, to pass a defile ; and discipline can only be attained by organisation ; but I admit (what those who reap the benefits of the present chaotic system may consider a great evil) that organisation checks fraud !

Had the baggage corps been there, no baggage would have been allowed to enter the pass at Tussoo without orders, and, when ordered, would have moved off in files in silence, order, and security. It is the possession of such discipline that makes us superior to our enemies ; without it we can only be equal to them. Had the enemy (who was marching parallel to us on that day) possessed discipline sufficient in his own march to take advantage of the delay and confusion in ours, Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton

might have had different comments to make about the passage of the Tussoo defile.

I am not induced to make any remark upon the succeeding paragraph of page 7. It is unworthy of notice, and it is vain for Colonel Burlton to hope by clumsy and witless ribaldry, which he so often uses, to mislead his reader from the sound arguments affecting this important question ; nor can the darling vices of his Commissariat department be long maintained by such advocacy.

In page 8, Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton denies that camels move at so slow a rate as one mile or one and a half per hour. Admitting that he is correct in saying that an ordinary camel in Bengal will accomplish his two miles with ease in the hour : still this is not the question. Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton has in this, as in every instance, apparently misunderstood Sir Charles Napier's meaning, who evidently has not chosen for his example a powerful Bengal camel, carrying his ordinary load "*over commonly passable ground*" or "*on a good road*," but gives a true picture of the average progress made by the *mass of baggage animals* on the march of an army making their way, as they have almost invariably to do, *across country*, and *overloaded*, and therefore *physically incapable* of accomplishing more than one mile or one and a half an hour, *even on a good road* ! But, moving as they do, with an army across country, "opening for miles, and covering the length and breadth of the land, seeking to avoid a marsh here, a defile there, now a hill, now a wood," who is there that has served in the field in India, and has not seen the trail of the baggage, consisting of long lines of weakly and overloaded brutes, continue to stagger into camp for five or six hours after the arrival of the troops, and brought up, too, by a rear-guard, harassed and exhausted by its severe duties and exposure ?

These are the animals to which Sir Charles Napier has

directed attention (not to the *strong camels* which Colonel Burlton has so triumphantly described). Sir Charles Napier saw the danger of such a state of things : he conceived a remedy, and put his scheme in operation in Scinde, with entire success.

The anecdote repeated by Sir Charles Napier regarding the elephant, which regulated its own load, is perfectly true. This elephant was attached to the 60th Rifles in the late campaign, and carried the officers' mess tent. It resisted every attempt to load it beyond a certain weight ; and invariably, if pressed, threw the poles of the tent off its back. I have been at some pains to ascertain the facts of this story, which have been corroborated from various quarters, including the officer commanding the baggage corps. This irrelevant criticism of Colonel Burlton's, repeated in five different parts of his pamphlet, I shall not take the trouble of referring to again, merely reminding him here, that it is as fruitless as it is unbecoming to attempt thus to mislead his readers, or thus to defend the gross abuses that exist in the department over which he appears to have presided with so very little profit, at least *to the public*.

The following paragraph in page 9, I will quote at length, as another specimen of Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton's *style* of argument :—

" Camels are made to die in all directions, and lose their ears and tails before they die; the morning is made dark as pitch for the nonce, then up comes the unhappy Commissary, and 500 camels and their drivers are made to desert ; ' sticks, stones, butts of muskets, points of bayonets, are all vigorously put into action to urge the overloaded camels ' (the miserable remainder that is) ' on their weary march, which is tracked by their dead bodies ! ' And so the *curtain falls* ; the astonished audience being supposed to exclaim — ' This all happened, because you had not armed men to drive your camels ! ' That is the moral to Sir Charles's fable ! "

No one should know better than Lieutenant-Colonel

Burlton himself, that what Sir Charles Napier has stated is *no fable*. Having been for many years in the Commissariat department of the army, it appears most strange that this officer should affect ignorance on points particularly belonging to his department ; but of which, every individual who has ever served in the field in India, is fully aware.

All casualties among Government cattle are reported to the Commissary-General in camp, in the manner stated by Sir Charles Napier, viz. : by producing either the brand of the animal, or its ears, or its tail. The late Captain Threshie, Commissary-General at Peshawur, stated, that when in charge of Commissariat cattle in the field, seventy deaths a-day were sometimes reported to him in this manner.

That the poor brutes often "lose their ears and tails before they die." is equally true. I have myself often seen them goaded on, till they fell from fatigue and overburdens ; no time can be spared to bring on the exhausted animals, and the contractors cannot lose their "compensation,"—therefore, off go the ears, or the brands are cut out, and the poor brutes are left to die or to recover, according to their fate.

Had Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton, when Commissary-General of the army, examined the accounts of the Sukkur Commissariat department for 1844-45, he would have found that the 500 camels and their drivers, which, according to Colonel Burlton, *are made* to desert, actually did desert in the midst of Sir Charles Napier's operations in the hill campaign.

It is most true, for it is matter of history, that the march of Indian armies can generally be tracked by the dead bodies of cattle.

During the Afghan campaigns it is well known that

one might have traced the road from Scinde round to Peshawur by the bones of camels alone! But a word upon this subject. In page 30 of his pamphlet, Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton makes a strange assertion relative to the "general estimate" of the number of camels that died, during the first campaign, in Affghanistan, under Lord Kean, which had been stated by Sir Charles Napier, on good authority, to be 50,000; but this, Colonel Burlton treats as one of Sir Charles Napier's *fallacies*, and states that "the total number of camels *employed* with Lord Kean's army, as above stated, *did not amount to* 14,000."

Supposing not more than 14,000 to have been employed at one time, it does not follow that in an arduous campaign, three times that number might not have died. I find, however, in Major Hough's history of that war, in the Appendix to the First Volume, that in Lord Kean's first campaign, 30,000 *camels died* in fourteen months, in Affghanistan alone! * that is, *not including the loss of cattle in convoys along two lines of communication, from 1000 to 1500 miles in length!* and which must have been quite equal to, if not greater, than the loss above stated, the cost of which is stated at 229,000*l.*

To have overlooked these points, is impossible in the late Commissary-General of the Indian army; it would have been inexcusable even in a very young military man, unconnected with the Commissariat, and therefore without the best grounds for knowing the enormous losses that fall upon this particular department in war.

I have never heard Major Hough's authority, as an historian, questioned; indeed, I have been at some pains to check his returns on this point, and I have the best authority for believing that Major Hough's estimate of the loss of camels is considerably below the actual number;

* See Appendix, No. 1.

and the source whence Sir Charles Napier derived his information was equally good.

The exclamation of Lieut.-Colonel Burlton's "*astonished audience*," that "this all happened because you had not armed men to drive your camels," is very true, with the slight correction of the intentional deceit, here repeated, in the use of the word "*armed*" instead of "*disciplined*" men, because these "*armed men*" (that is, armed and disciplined men) are guided by such an admirable system for regulating baggage, that few or none of the misfortunes and accidents, so correctly described by Sir Charles Napier, would occur with such a system in force; animals would *not*, as I before observed, be *overloaded*, and therefore *not* sink under their loads "by scores," nor be left to die on the road.

Camels and their drivers would *not* desert, because the men of the baggage corps, being equally distributed among the hired followers, would constitute a *perpetual guard* over these men.

Baggage animals would *not* be driven beyond their powers of endurance, because the regulations of the baggage corps "positively prohibit servants, or any persons with the baggage, to beat or hurry on camels, or to disobey the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the baggage corps, who are to have the entire command of the baggage on the line of march."—(*Scinde, G. O., January, 1845.*)

Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton says, that—

"Sir C. Napier has coloured his pictures so highly, and exaggerated the probable benefits to be derived from the employment of a few hundred disciplined camel-men so greatly, that it is not easy to deal with the question with suitable gravity and decorum!"

It was impossible to exaggerate, or too highly to colour, the defects complained of in the army transport department over which this irritated writer so long presided,

and consequently it was impossible to exaggerate or overcolour the benefit of any effectual remedy for such scandalous defects and disorder. Sir Charles Napier's statements are all taken from facts which occurred under his own eye, and of which there are official proofs. The advantages of his plan did not consist, as Colonel Burlton insinuates, in "the employment of a few hundred disciplined camel-men" alone, but in the adoption of the most simple and admirable rules for the organisation of every thing connected with the movement of army baggage. These rules have been tested in the field, and it is somewhat curious that at the very moment when Colonel Burlton was inventing a little volume of abuse against them, in Cheltenham, the rules in Scinde were producing great benefit and comfort to the troops, saving to the State, and efficiency in war. It is superfluous in Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton to apologise for his want of "suitable gravity and decorum;" there can be no possible excuse for this acknowledged want of decorum. The cause of such indecent levity in seeking to defend abuses over which he had long presided, is clear enough,—that he had no sound argument to adduce in their defence.

In page 10, Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton, while he admits that Sir Charles Napier "has scarcely, if at all, exceeded the mark," in allowing five camp-followers to every fighting man in Bengal, still cannot refrain from pointing at the "pretty picture of noise, confusion, danger, and slaughter, which Sir Charles's vivid pen has laid before us in his pamphlet."

I would ask Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton how he would describe the scene of the Cabool massacre, when the masses of unarmed camp-followers rushed among our columns for protection, and mixing themselves with the soldiers, choked all order and discipline, and CAUSED THE

DESTRUCTION of the whole army by turning them into a scared and unmanageable mob ! Could this be described otherwise than as a scene of "noise, confusion, danger, and slaughter?"

How was it at Buddewal, when nearly the whole baggage of Sir Harry Smith's detachment was swept away by the enemy before his face, and his sick and wounded murdered in their doolies ?

Sir Charles Napier describes what disasters are *liable* to occur from allowing such enormous masses of useless people to follow an army in the field.

But the pen of Sir Charles Napier, vivid and truthful though it be, would fall far short of the reality in describing such horrors as actually did occur on the occasions I have mentioned. The *hordes* of people, of all classes and denominations, who are permitted to follow our armies in India, are not to be conceived ! I am told that the Bazars after Chillianwalla, and throughout the late campaign, were little short of those at Calcutta ! Every description of merchant, mechanic, and profligate were there located, carrying on their different callings and pursuits, as in a great town, and seemingly utterly indifferent to the circumstance of a powerful and ruthless enemy being in their immediate vicinity ; indeed, I am told that an active correspondence was kept up with the enemy by the merchants in our own Bazars, and it is natural to suppose that tobacco and grain were not the only commodities which were conveyed to the camp of the enemy, that Shere Sing was kept informed of everything that went on, and that not a detachment moved without his knowledge. Colonel Burlton himself, though he clings with Commissariat fondness to his habits, cannot omit on this subject giving one of his "*higglety-pigglety*" descriptions, and we have it accordingly in page 38 :—

" Pass also the extraordinary assemblage and varied groups of men, women, and children, ponies, mules, asses, bullocks, and carts, laden with all sorts and kinds of conceivable and inconceivable things: grain, sugar, and salt, cloths, sweetmeats, and tobacco, silks, garlic, shawls, potatoes, stockings, and slippers, turners, carpenters, and blacksmiths' shops and forges, tailors and cobblers, saddlers and perfumers, fiddlers, nautch girls and jugglers, which help to make up an Indian Bazar. The sudder, or principal bazar, of a large army, is a perfect town in all but the houses; for those, substitute small tents, or cloth awnings, pitched in regular rows, and you will have no great difficulty in persuading yourself that you are in a well-stocked town of a tolerable size."

I imagine that few will be inclined to deny that there is much room for reduction in this branch of an army in the field. Such masses of unarmed and unorganised men, women, and children, with all their traps, ponies, bullocks, and donkies, are not only dangerous accompaniments in *war*, but are mischievous to any large army occupying an enemy's country. It is idle to say that "they give no trouble, they feed themselves;" they have mouths which must be filled daily, as well as the mouths of our soldiers; they are numerous as a flight of locusts, and consume the country for miles around, and thereby daily widen the circle within which our Commissariat should draw supplies. Every blade of grass—ay, even the roots,—are gathered for their cattle, thereby increasing the difficulties of obtaining forage for the cavalry and artillery.

I question much the necessity for permitting this Sudder Bazar—"this well-stocked town of a tolerable size"—to accompany an army at all! Let it be borne in mind, that every *regiment in the field has a bazar of its own*—a counterpart of the "well-stocked town of a tolerable size," although adapted, in magnitude, for the supply of the regiment only.*

* The reader can now form some idea of the enormous amount of camp-followers of an Indian army—in time of peace the numbers are trebled! Soldiers in Bengal have men to *clean their boots*; other men to *clean their arms and*

A regimental Bazar, if well-regulated, ought to be sufficient (with the Commissariat) to supply the wants of the regiment and its followers; and one of these bazars attached to every corps, and every large department in the field, would therefore be quite ample for the supply of an army, however large it may be.

The principle is good; there is division of labour; every commanding officer is responsible for his own bazar; and thus the supervision is the same, whether the army be large or small.

It is the duty of every commanding officer, before taking the field, to take care that merchants are engaged with sufficient capital and influence to insure a command of supplies, and artificers enough to carry on the work which may be required by the regiment, and that none are permitted to accompany the corps except those who were engaged and registered.

Every battery in the field has its forge and complete establishments of artificers attached to it; and every regiment has its armourers, saddlers, &c.: therefore the army ought to be nearly independent of the Sudder Bazar—"turners, carpenters, and blacksmiths' shops and forges, tailors and cobblers, saddlers and perfumers." A vigilant chowderie (head-man), with his peons under the adjutant of each corps, ought to be sufficient police, when in camp; while on the line of march each bazar would be kept in its place in order and security by the regulations of the baggage corps, and not allowed to run wild over the country, plundering and thieving in every hamlet.

In page 11, the Commissary-General desires to return to his "MUTTONS;" (it is, perhaps, a pity he ever left them!) however, he reads Sir Charles Napier a lesson, on the

accoutrements!! I have heard of commanding officers forbidding such nonsense—it is to be regretted that their example is not universally followed.

order of march adopted by Lord Lake,—viz.: “ marching in two parallel columns, the infantry and artillery following the road, the cavalry making its way across the country, and preserving its proper distance, from a quarter of a mile to a mile, or more, according to circumstances, whilst the whole of the baggage filled up the intervals between the two columns.”

This order of march is tolerably good under *certain* circumstances: such as,

1st. An open country.

2nd. The presence of an enemy with a numerous though inferior cavalry; but if the enemy happened to be *superior* in cavalry, our own would be cut to pieces, or fall back upon the baggage, and the baggage upon the *infantry* and guns, and all would be confusion, for it would be impossible for infantry to form under such circumstances,—it would be swept away by the routed baggage.

3rd. When the commander has an object in view (*perhaps the object of the campaign*), and to attain which he sets aside all regard to time or other considerations, and steadily perseveres in preserving this order of march; for it is impossible to suppose, that even in a tolerably open country, that great square of troops and baggage could have moved at a rate exceeding one mile an hour *at most*. As to marching “ *at the rate of two or two and a half miles an hour*,” as Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton says he did, with *heavy guns*, and clouds of the enemy’s cavalry hanging on his flanks and rear, I hold it to be impossible! But suppose a British army in these days so disposed round its own baggage, extending, not a quarter of a mile, or a mile in width, as Lord Lake’s did, but *five miles* in width, and at least eight or ten miles in length; * I say,

* This was the estimated extent occupied by the baggage of the British army in the open plain on its march to Goojrat last year. Many officers can bear testimony to this statement.

suppose an army so divided about its baggage, occupying a circumference of twenty-six miles, before a manœuvring army of Sikhs, capable of taking up positions and offering battle with all arms united ! one half of the British army would be cut to pieces before the other half knew that they were attacked !

It must be apparent, therefore, to military readers, that Lieut.-Colonel Burlton's proposition is not applicable to a general system of march ; and admitting that it was, it has nothing to do with the argument, because organisation is equally necessary in this as in every other case, whether it be required to move the baggage to front, flank, rear, or centre, or to any other position, *with* the rapidity so desirable in presence of an enemy.

In the mountainous defiles of Affghanistan, from the Bolan to the Khyber, in Scinde, clothed with dense jungles, and intersected at every half mile by deep canals, or in the Punjab, between the Jelum and the Indus, in any enclosed country in fact, how could such an order of march be maintained ?

Lord Lake's order of march, as Colonel Burlton describes it, may be allowable under circumstances (as I said before), which may render such a disposition desirable or possible ; but, viewing the question generally, is it not better for the baggage to be able to *defend itself and followers*, and leave the army free to operate in the field, opposing an equal front of all arms to that of the enemy, than to have an entire army *disposed in a vast square about its own baggage* ? Such a state of things in general warfare would bring the movements of an army to correspond and be secondary to those of its baggage, not to those of the enemy !

At page 12. the Commissary-General directs his reader to refer to the pages of Sir Charles Napier's pamphlet,

which he says he has "thus far reviewed." I have duly complied with our author's instructions, and find that, instead of a review, he has offered a very gross and inexcusable misrepresentation of the General's motives, principles, and meaning! I likewise feel bound to observe, that Colonel Burlton has put forward his misrepresentations in a most unbecoming and unaccountable tone.

In this page, also, is a note, in which the Commissary, with much pathos, refers to the companions of his youth. "Thirty-two years have passed, and I stand alone of all the European officers who were with the regiment during those campaigns. I alone remain to tell the *tale*; and I might almost say the same as regards the native officers and men." This truly is a frightful mortality, upon which we would venture to ask the Commissary a question or two:—Would the chances have been somewhat reduced of the Commissary now finding himself standing alone to tell his tale, if he had stuck to his corps, shared in their hardships, and been deprived of those comforts which his snug position as Commissary secured to him? How many of that gallant regiment, too, have been laid low by hardships that they might have been spared? And how many might he now find standing by his side, if those comforts had been secured to them by a properly disciplined Commissariat and Baggage department, such as the General is now striving to promote, and such as the Commissary is now striving to oppose?

He tells us that Godha Sing was killed at his side, at Maharajpore:—now, how came the Commissary-General of the army *under fire* at Maharajpore? His business was surely to look after his Commissariat, and the Commissariat should have been with the baggage, and the baggage should have been *out of fire*! Perhaps the following extract of a letter, from a gallant officer who commanded

a brigade at the battle, which is published in Sir Charles Napier's pamphlet, will throw some light on the *Commissariat arrangements* on that occasion.

"When we went on the expedition to Gwalior, it is incredible the confusion which arose from the endless piles of baggage

"After the battle of Maharajpore, the army pushed on the following day about fourteen miles, and on our arriving at the encamping ground, the officer commanding one of the native corps, in my brigade, came to me to state that his men were physically incapable of performing some detached duty for which they were detailed, as they were exhausted from hunger; *that they had not had a morsel of food for two days*"

And Colonel Burlton was the Commissary-General of this army!

Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton derides the idea, that soldiers on the march in India suffer hardships from heat, &c. He says, remarking upon Sir Charles Napier's desire to alleviate hardships which had so often met his eye:—

"We next come to the bivouac, in which all sorts of horrible vexations and discomforts are accumulated for the benefit of the soldier,—fatigue, sun, rain, knapsacks, tent-pitching, grazing-guards, and musquitoes!"

And again,—

"Let the reader think of all this; let him ponder over the sad catalogue of mishaps and horrors depicted in this and other pages of Sir Charles Napier's pamphlet; let him then bear in mind that none such were ever before considered as necessary concomitants of Indian warfare; but, on the contrary, that it is notorious that European troops in India are never so healthy, their hospitals never so empty, as during a campaign; and then,—why then," &c.

It is little, indeed, that a Commissary-General need ever know, or care about, the sufferings of the poor European soldier, as, choked with heat and dust, he toils into camp, and throwing his weary body down, waits patiently in the glaring sun for the coming of his tent and his meagre breakfast, which may not arrive for hours.

• The Commissary-General is long since snug in his spacious double-poled tent, with closed chicks keeping out

the glare, and a host of obsequious servants brushing away the flies from the well-spread breakfast-table.

It is little the Commissary-General need care to know, or care to inquire about, "fatigue, sun, rain, knapsacks, tent-pitching, grazing-guards, or musquitoes,"—these are all "fables!" The poor foot-soldier undergoes no fatigue in India—he is never exposed to a fierce sun nor to wet! Tent-pitching, after a hot and wearying march, is a trifle, and grazing-guards pleasant amusement.

Let Lieut.-Colonel Burlton ascertain from the men of the 28th regiment (now at home) the nature of their sufferings whilst traversing the arid plains of Scinde, in 1843. He will find that three short days left fifty of their number blackened corpses, stricken by the sun.

Let him ask the men of the 40th (also at home) the nature of a "grazing-guard." They will tell him that, instead of resting in their tents after their long marches in Affghanistan, each soldier had to take up his firelock and drag himself after the camels some miles from camp, and there remain during the heat of the day, doing the duty of the hired camel-men, who had deserted.

In the late campaign, when the 32nd marched to Mooltan, did not the soldiers suffer, when one hundred and ninety-six men went into hospital, and sixteen died in one day?—or the 14th Dragoons, who lost sixteen men in one day between Ferozepore and Lahore, and had one-fourth of their number in hospital at Ramnuggur? *

The soldiers' sufferings in India are no fables. I have seen them marked on the blackened faces of the dead by the way-side and in the haggard looks of the living; or, worse than all, stamped by fever on the faces of hundreds in the crowded hospitals, when the campaign had passed, and its excitement no longer sustained them.

* See Appendix, No. 4.

In Scinde, after the campaign in 1843, 12,000 out of an army of 15,000, occupying the newly-conquered country, were prostrated with fever.

Soldiers do not suffer! I hold it a mercy, indeed, that he who never spared himself when in India, in his endeavours to alleviate the sufferings and increase the comforts of the soldiers, is once more at his work at their head; and that the man who holds their sufferings so light has at least lost the practical power to augment them, and must rest satisfied with such splenetic exhibitions of his inclination, as that now under review.

In page 14, adverting to that part of Sir Charles Napier's pamphlet where he explains how baggage organised on his principle, if attacked, "could move rapidly away, fighting, or throw itself into hollow squares and defend itself till aid arrived," Colonel Burlton says,—

"Now, I would ask, why should a baggage corps of camels, laden to the full regulation weight, be able to move away more rapidly than others?—what virtue is there in a red jacket on the backs, or a musket or carbine in the hands, of the drivers, to add agility to the limbs and movements of this most awkward animal?"

In the first place, precisely the same difference exists that there is between a regiment of Guards and a London mob! Colonel Burlton's question forces me to repeat my former observations as to his total ignorance of military principles: the present disorderly masses of baggage are incapable of moving *in any but the one direction*; rolling onwards like a living flood, it has no power to control or direct its movements, and, when attacked, all becomes inextricable confusion and slaughter, as at Cabool and Buddiwal. In the next place, what Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton calls the "full regulation weight" of a load, is too much even for a Bengal camel to carry with the ease and endurance necessary to keep pace with troops, in long marches and in a campaign of any duration.

This fact was brought to the notice of Government, in 1847, by a committee assembled at Simla, composed of the oldest and most experienced officers in the Indian army, but it is notorious that even this "full regulation weight" is usually nearly doubled! The loads of private hired camels are not limited, and the animals are therefore generally laden far beyond their powers.

The committee recommended that the regulation load should be reduced to 160 seers (320 lbs.), which happens to be the precise load which Sir Charles Napier fixed for the baggage corps. The only fault I have to find is, that the restriction as to loads recommended by the committee applies only to public cattle, because private cattle, when overloaded and mingled with the public, must do the same mischief in lengthening out and obstructing the line of march as if the *whole* were overloaded! I have repeatedly known private baggage-animals stopped by the baggage corps on the march, and loads, when weighed, have been found to exceed 700 lbs.—ay, 750 lbs.!

It cannot be expected that baggage can ever be organised where such overloading of private cattle is permitted, and no cattle so overloaded could be expected "to move rapidly away" at all! But the rules of the baggage corps, by restricting the loads of *all animals*, both private and public, to a light standard, and by the introduction of strict discipline among the masses, enable the animals "to move away more rapidly than others," and, without doubt, "add agility to the limbs and movements of this most awkward animal."

A carbine in the hands of one drilled driver to every three or four camels is a more efficient guard than troops of the line. Colonel Burlton knows well, that it is the habit of these animals to be led in strings,—the nose of one camel tied to the tail of another. A drilled driver

leading every four camels would move in any direction by word of command, while the undrilled drivers behind him *could not do otherwise* than follow their leader.

Colonel Burlton continues, "As to drivers fighting,—why should they, in the case supposed, be more able to fight than the baggage-guard or rear-guard?" There is certainly no reason why camel-drivers should fight *better* than the troops of the line ;—no one but Colonel Burlton has ever put forth such a proposition! At the same time, I should be more inclined to reckon upon victory from armed and organised drivers, who have a thorough knowledge of their work, commanded by their officers, and capable of leading their camels as directed, and fighting at the same time, than from the individual courage of troops scattered throughout a long straggling and disconnected line of animals, incapable of being defended, and without officers on the spot to control the camel-men or direct the troops.

The real question appears to be this :—Under which system can the baggage of an army most effectually resist an attack? Take the present system, with overloaded baggage-animals straggling for miles on the march, the unarmed followers apt to be thrown into inextricable confusion on every slight alarm, the guard weakened in its means of defence by the length of line it has to protect, *and the gaps caused by the slow pace of overloaded animals, sometimes exceeding half-a-mile*, or, mingled with the disorderly masses, incapable of being brought into action at any particular point ;—can this system be more effectual in resisting attack than that which is (as I have shown) essentially calculated to preserve order and discipline among the masses, which keeps those masses entire and separate bodies, capable of being moved with celerity and ease in any direction, or, in the event of a sudden or over-

whelming attack, thrown into ghoses (circles) with followers in the centre, the camels kneeling, and the drivers firing from behind the loads,—thus forming “living forts,” which no cavalry in the world could face ?

Colonel Burlton treats these “living forts” as some wild, impracticable scheme of Sir Charles Napier’s ! In all histories of ancient warfare, this disposition of the baggage in battle is mentioned.

The orders of the baggage corps were founded on the practice of the ancient Germans. But I need not take Colonel Burlton so far away for examples. The history of our border warfare in Cutch, twenty years ago, tells of the practice in its most literal sense—the plundering Khosahs from the Scinde side of the Rumm of Cutch, when hard-pressed by our cavalry, used to throw their camels (laden with plunder) into kneeling circles, and receive the charge with a volley from behind the loads, that invariably hurled our troopers back discomfited. None know better than the inhabitants of these countries the formidable nature of such defences, whilst the facility with which they can be formed, and the sad experience gained by our troops in rashly attacking them, must afford sufficient proofs, to the minds of any real military men, of the soundness of those principles on which Sir Charles Napier founded his orders for the disposition of baggage in action.

Colonel Burlton is at a loss to understand how a baggage-guard of the line and a rear-guard should be more tired than men of the baggage corps would be, with a long hot march : he says,—

“ Sir Charles supposes, or grants, that these (the baggage and rear-guards of the line) are zealous, but tired out with a long hot march, and consequently unable to defend their charge ; but how did it not happen to strike him at the same time, that if the length of the march, the

heat, and so forth, had tired the two guards so much as to render them incapable of performing their duty (that of protecting the baggage) the same causes would necessarily and equally have operated on the men of the baggage corps? Why should the latter, in short, be able to move rapidly, fight, form square, and defend themselves, when their natural and allotted protectors, who have undergone no more exposure or fatigue than themselves, are altogether *hors de combat*?"

In the first place, Sir Charles does not suppose the guards "incapable of performing their duty," or "*hors de combat*;" he supposes the baggage-guard "tired with a hot march *and with its exertions to keep the baggage together*;" the rear-guard, also tired and "*delayed by the numbers of camels that have thrown their loads or fallen from fatigue, and by other stragglers.*"

Here we have the plain state of the case. The baggage is scattered, the strong animals push to the front, the weak or overloaded ones straggle behind, the guard itself is *divided and exhausted in its endeavours to keep the baggage together*.

The rear-guard *is delayed far in the rear*, also harassed and exhausted in its endeavours to collect and bring on stragglers and those which have fallen from fatigue, &c., and in this position the enemy attacks the baggage! how can the guards, separated and scattered as they are, effectually defend their charge? It is impossible. The line must be penetrated at some point, camels ham-strung and carried off, camp-followers murdered, and the enemy got clear away before the guard can even concentrate, and any systematic or organised resistance be made.

Who that has served in India, does not recollect the baggage come straggling into camp *late in the day* with its guard in ones and twos, and last of all, about 3 or 4 P. M., the rear-guard coming in with stragglers and the *wreck* of the march, looking harassed and exhausted (as

well they might) from being twelve hours in the sun without refreshment ? *

Now turn to the baggage corps with their light regulated loads and drilled armed leaders to every four or five camels ; with officers and non-commissioned officers dispersed through the masses, to give and pass words of command ; order, regularity, and confidence pervading all ; moving in distinct and compact bodies, capable of repelling attack at every point, well up with the troops, who are close *at hand* to give support in any serious attack, and entering camp along with them, securing comfort to all. It is surely clear that in point of exposure and fatigue “the same causes” do *not* “necessarily and equally operate on the men of the baggage corps.”

I do not understand why troops of the line should be called “*natural* and allotted protectors” of baggage ; I should, on the contrary, be inclined to consider an armed camel-man as a more “natural protector” to his animal and its load.

Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton’s remarks, in page 15, on the Letters of General England and Brigadier Wallace,† are, I must say, extremely disingenuous. He says,—

“I will not stop to ask whether heavy rain would not tell as injuriously on the camels of a baggage corps, as on any other camels with an army.”

Now, a reference to Brigadier Wallace’s letter will show that his allusion to rain was the mere report of his progress on the march, which he was required daily to make to the General, and which might have been altogether omitted in the publication of Sir Charles Napier’s pamphlet—the *pith* of the letter, which is *very cunningly omitted* by Colonel Burlton, being as follows : “For the hired camels I am sorry to say the *men will not go*”—they

* I have often seen a rear-guard out for twenty-six hours.

† See Appendix 2

“declared most positively that they *would not go* to the southward. This change took place from reports being circulated in the country that the Ameers intended to hold out, and they should lose their camels (thinking we should be defeated).”

Sir Charles Napier intended by this example to show how entirely dependent the operations of an army were upon the will of a few hundred *hired camel-men*! whereas with a baggage corps, the commander is free to move in any direction he pleases, the camel-men being a part of his army, and as much attached to the service as the Sepoys of the line.

Another attempt at misrepresentation of Sir Charles's meaning is full of subtlety :—

“Whilst Sir Charles's aim and object is to show, not the uselessness only, but the evils and detriment resulting from the quantity of carriage which *usually* accompanies an Indian force, the letters he adduces in support of his argument show, that without that *usual* quantity the two detachments referred to were completely disabled, and incapacitated from carrying out the important movements before them.”

Now, there is not the remotest allusion made by either General England or Sir Charles Napier to the “*usual* quantity” of carriage. The expression is a fabrication of Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton's, and the italics are his own.

General England expressly mentions* “the *requisite* carriage for our force,” as they had not more than a thousand Government camels. He says, “The difficulty of carriage *for our sick*, and the rascality of all Brahoocce contractors for such assistance have been *my chief difficulties*.”

It is clear therefore that whatever might have been his “*usual* quantity” of carriage at other times, General England in the present strait wanted even what was *requisite to move his sick*, &c., and for this *requisite quantity* he was dependent entirely upon the Brahoocces, his enemies,

* See Appendix 3

who supplied them at exorbitant rates one day, deserted with them the next, and would bring the same camels again on the third day to be resold to the British! That the understrappers of Colonel Burlton's department were in league with the "rascally Brahooce contractors" to plunder the Government, and that they did so to a certain extent, is notorious. Had the system of the baggage corps been in operation, General England would not have wanted one camel, and the Government would not have been defrauded of laks of rupees during the Affghan campaign either by Burltonian friends or Brahooce foes.

Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton supposes that out of 20,000 camels with an army in the field, 2000 may be dispensed with, as conveying what are not necessary for a campaign, such as beer, champagne, claret, &c., I suppose. He observes,—

"If we do, what, after all, would be gained? We should have 18,000 camels still with our force; and when we have that number, the 2000 we have dispensed with will be missed rather through the inconvenience occasioned by their absence, than by any perceptible diminution of the baggage-train accompanying the force, or of the labours of those employed in controlling or guarding the baggage on the march."

Not so, the beer and champagne would doubtless be missed by some of the messes of her Majesty's regiments, and by the high functionaries of the army, but by none else. Colonel Burlton may rest assured that these 2000 are the *very camels* which cause most of the mischief on the line of march. These are the very beasts that are overloaded and ill-cared for,—the alloy, that, when mingled with the masses of which they form one-tenth part, adulterate the whole. Does Colonel Burlton suppose that one overloaded, ill-conditioned brute in a string of ten camels does not retard that string? Of course it does, and every mile of a march widens the intervals between the strong

and the weak, the overladen and the lightly laden ; and therefore whether the number be 10 camels or 20,000, if one-tenth of the whole be overloaded, the mischief is the same. It is not however the *diminution* of the baggage-train that is Sir Charles Napier's object, so much as organization of the whole. If I understand his principle right, he would, I am sure, gladly have back the 2000 camels (*not* the beer and champagne though), and reducing the loads of the 18,000 to a light standard, place the surplus baggage on the 2000 which Colonel Burlton would leave behind.

I have already remarked, however, that "reduction" would be found most apparent and beneficial in the *enormous bazaars* which at present are allowed to follow an army in the field, and which Colonel Burlton has not thought of in his contemplated reduction of 2000 camels from officers' private baggage.

One is usually accustomed to accord to the writer of a criticism, the merit of possessing some detailed knowledge at least of the subject he comments upon. In page 17, however, Colonel Burlton exhibits a lamentable deficiency in this respect ; he describes the Scinde baggage corps as a "*kind of mounted and loaded regiment ! Every camel is to have its rider !*" The value of Colonel Burlton's comments may therefore be estimated by the fact, that when in Scinde Sir Charles Napier ordered that any man found *mounted* on the line of march, on a *loaded* camel, was to be flogged by the Provost Marshal on the spot.

At page 18, Colonel Burlton admits that "with a small detachment, with one brigade or a single regiment, where the camel corps would carry *all* the baggage, and little or no other carriage was taken, such a corps might be more efficient than a similar number of hired camels ;" and he "is at no loss, therefore, to understand the praise con-

ferred on it by the Lieutenant-Colonels of the 17th regiment." If Colonel Burlton thus admits the utility of the corps for one brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Pennycuik, he must, by analogy, admit the same to every brigade which composed the force (15,000 men); for the rules of the baggage corps extend over all. Each brigadier made a similar report to Colonel Pennycuik, and each commander of a regiment made one similar to Lieutenant-Colonel MacPherson.

Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton, in stating his opinion that the baggage corps has lately been rapidly deteriorating, observes, "*and no person who thoroughly understood the class of people with whom the gallant General had to deal*, could well doubt what would be the final result of his experiment." This is very true. The Bombay Government ordered the corps to be stifled, shortly after Sir Charles Napier left Scinde.

I must now quote at length the opinions of Lieutenant-Colonel Burlton regarding the only description of men, he supposes, available in India as privates and camel-men in the baggage corps, as the subject is of much importance, and I find, in this part of India, that Colonel Burlton is not singular in his notions. This error I take to proceed from prejudice and ignorance of the value of the excellent materials at our disposal in India. It is probable that such an animal as Colonel Burlton's beau ideal of a camel-man may exist; but why a camel-corps should be composed of these rascals instead of good men, nobody, whose intellects are not disordered, can divine.

"The camel drivers are amongst the worst, the most demoralized, dissolute class of the people of India; they are unfit to be trusted with arms, or treated as soldiers, and if they were once enrolled, dressed and disciplined as such, they would no longer be *worth their salt* as camel-drivers. They would, in fact, be above their work in the latter capacity, and at the same time good for nothing as soldiers. Their

camels would be neither fed nor groomed, and their high wages, nearly double what they now receive, would enable them to indulge more than ever in their great luxuries—opium and bhang; rendering them, ere long, useless and inefficient, if not mischievous. In the character and habits of these men is to be found one great difficulty in bringing such a corps, as Sir Charles describes, to anything like an efficient and useful state."

Here we have the opinions of a man who had lived forty years in India. They ought to have weight, if one could believe that Colonel Burlton ever looked to the right or left for improvement or change, or ever cared to rouse himself from the demoralising habit of allowing old customs and ideas to grow up like fungi, till they become law, to the perversion of common sense and reason.

I will briefly give the statement of Captain Fitzgerald on this important subject. This able officer commanded the Scinde camel corps from the time it was first raised in 1843, and by his zeal and abilities brought this magnificent corps to such a state of discipline as repeatedly to call forth the warm praises of his General. I may add, that the surwans, or camel-drivers in the two corps, the *camel corps* and the *baggage corps*, are exactly on the same footing in every respect. In fact, according to Colonel Burlton's description, *they wear red or blue jackets, and carry carbines.*

Captain Fitzgerald observes :—

"The camel-men of the Scinde camel corps are a well-conducted body of men, drilled and disciplined, and paraded with their Sepoy brethren daily. They are composed of Brahmans, Chuttrees, Rajpoots, Mussulmen, &c.; in short, they are the self-same men that fill the ranks of corps of the line. They feed, clean, and tend their camels, and perform the same offices for their camels that Colonel Burlton's 'demoralized' camel-drivers do; neither does their pay render them 'useless,' or 'inefficient,' or 'mischievous.' These are *facts*. Colonel Burlton is wrong both as to facts and 'inferences.'"

I will add to Captain Fitzgerald's statement an instance of the conduct in action of this "most demoralised, dis-

solute class," that "are unfit to be trusted with arms, or treated as soldiers." When employed one day in reconnoitring in the hill campaign, we heard a rapid fire of musketry open, at some distance from the hill on which we stood, and which was maintained for some time. This proved to be a sudden attack made by the enemy upon our camels at graze, which was met and repulsed with the greatest gallantry by the armed surwans (camel-men) of the camel corps, who not only defeated the enemy, but following them up, recaptured a number of the Commissariat camels of the force, whose terrified and unarmed keepers had fled, and left them an easy prey to the enemy.

The following General Order was issued on the occasion by the Governor of Scinde :—

"HEAD QUARTERS, SUKKUR,
26th March, 1845.

"No. 2. Commandant Fitzgerald is requested to express to the Surwans of the camel corps (Jemadar Dowlut Sing, Duffadar Nowla, Surwans Cheeta Sing, Jehangeer Khan, and Ram Buccus) the approbation of his Excellency the Governor. Their good conduct in recapturing several camels from Belooche horsemen at Goojroo deserves his thanks, and he has pleasure in thus publicly expressing his satisfaction.

"The commandant of the camel corps is also to inform Rumzan Aikeer that his name has been sent to the Commander-in-Chief, along with the names of those brave Europeans who so gloriously mounted the precipice at Truckkee on the 8th of March

"The European soldiers spoke highly to the Governor of the courage exhibited by Rumzan Aikeer."

Colonel Burlton now proceeds to inform us how Government cattle are maintained in Bengal :—

"At frontier stations enough of these animals are kept ready at all times to enable the whole of the troops, with their tents and ammunition, to move at a few hours' notice."

This is a most important fact that we have learned from our critic ; and if Sir Charles Napier had conferred no other benefit, he deserves well of his country for having, in sporting phraseology, "drawn" a real live Commissary—a Commissary-General too. It appears here, from this

gentleman's own pen, that the country supports permanently a very large establishment of Commissariat animals, amply sufficient (with the proper organisation that Sir Charles Napier has tested) to introduce order, regularity, and a precise control of baggage movements into the largest establishment that the probable exigency of war in India may require to take the field at any time. But the organisation which is the essence of the whole is wanting; not only is it wanting, but when suggested by an experienced general officer, out-comes Mr. Commissary-General Burlton full of indignation and resistance of everything in the shape of organisation or order as applicable to his "higgledy-piggledy" department. His objections to what is proposed are based on glaring misrepresentations of every proposition, served up with a little clumsy ribaldry.

His advocacy of his own cherished principle is, that it brings the baggage into camp "topsy-turvy and higgledy-piggledy," &c. We have no doubt that the Commissary has other and strong reasons to convince him that there is a decided gain in keeping things as they are; but these reasons he has not thought fit to make public.

This last fact, of so large a permanent Commissariat establishment of Government animals, is indeed most important.

Were the system of the baggage corps adopted among the Government camels of Bengal, at frontier stations, the whole of the baggage of the army would be kept in order, both in peace and in war,—in the former, by regulating the means of effecting the reliefs; in the latter, by the power invested in the baggage corps, from the commandant (accompanied by the Provost Marshal's deputy) to the private surwan, of extending its own organisation to any extent required. If the baggage corps formed

one-third, one-fourth, or even one-tenth of the whole, there would be an armed and drilled leader to every three, four, or ten camels, with non-commissioned officers and officers distributed throughout the whole. Not a camel should be out of his place,—not an animal, public or private, overloaded ; no noise ; no interference with the surwans ; no straggling, no pushing to the front or lagging to the rear ; no confusion,—but order, regularity, and discipline would be maintained throughout.

Colonel Burlton gives the number of Government camels permanently maintained on the Bengal establishment at 6000. If these were formed into three baggage corps, distributed through the provinces, the saving to Government in peace, and the efficiency of its army in war, would be beyond calculation.

The affected *naireté* with which Colonel Burlton talks of his Commissariat establishment must draw a smile from every one who knows anything of the Commissariat department in India.

His gomashita (or native commissariat agent), for instance, what a nice specimen *he is*, to be brought in comparison with a native commissioned officer of the baggage corps (transferred from a regiment of the line), whose duty, I may observe, is to insure the discipline of the corps, and the proper attendance of the surwans on the camels. “I dare say,” says Colonel Burlton, “my gomashita would smell as sweet as his (Sir Charles Napier’s) captain, and my duffadars as his havildars.” Now, I will give the reader *one little* instance of the universal system of fraud practised by these rogues : in fact, such a set of villains and rogues as form Colonel Burlton’s department are not to be found in India. This instance was brought under my notice by Captain Maughan, the present commandant of the baggage corps, who thus writes :—

"A short time ago, certain Bengal hired camels, which the Bombay Commissariat had possessed themselves of on the line of march, were on arrival here made over to me to settle with. There was a Bengal Gomashta (or native Commissariat Government servant) over them, to keep and render their accounts. The number of camels was, I think, 800. When the owners of these camels found that they were transferred and under Bombay authority only, they came to me in a body, and complained that the Gomashta, Byjunlal by name, had stopped six annas from the pay of each camel-man, when he last paid them. I sent for the Gomashta. He at first stoutly denied, but afterwards admitted it; said he would at once produce the money he had stopped,—which he did, and the amount of which was 300 rupees. I asked him on what plea he received this sum. He said, he did not know; it was the *universal custom*, and that he believed the people gave it him, in order that should a certain number of camels be ordered for service, instead of taking any large number from one or two men, he should order small numbers from several. There was doubtless much truth in this, because a man who was entered, say for fifty camels, and was receiving Government pay for that amount, and yet had only thirty present, could afford to pay the keeper of accounts for not calling for the whole number; and this view of the case was materially strengthened by a reference to a previous muster-roll, in which there were the same number of camels on the 1st of the month, and every day during the month up to the last day. Without any changes or casualties at all, this, in our then situation, was absolutely impossible; but they were the Gomashta's accounts,—and hence the willingness on the part of the owners to pay or forfeit no less a sum than 300 rupees to this man monthly, until they found themselves safe from his authority. Now, this man was a Government servant on 15 rupees a month, and it was the receipt of that small monthly stipend that gave him, and that gives all of his class, the ability to cheat wholesale. I argue from this case, and others equally strong, that the cattle department requires strict and exclusive supervision, and that its connexion with the Commissariat is highly injurious to the interests of Government."

Now, this is a *little instance* of a *vast system* of fraud, speculation, and villany carried on in the Commissariat department in India, the limits of which are not to be conceived (and all, *but Commissariat Officers*, are aware of the fact). To mention the expense of a baggage corps in comparison with the losses the Government have sustained by frauds in the Commissariat department is ridiculous.

In *one contract alone*, for twelve months, the late Com-

mandant of the baggage corps, Major Jamison, saved to Government the enormous sum of 71,971 rupees, as compared with the Commissariat contracts; and, for this saving, he received the thanks of the Military Board, Bombay.

The most extraordinary, and not the least amusing, of all Colonel Burlton's notions are his remarks upon that part of Sir Charles Napier's pamphlet where the General describes the rapidity with which an army of 15,000 men were assembled at Roree, in February 1846, at the time of the Sutlej campaign.

Colonel Burlton's views on military questions are none of the clearest; the reader, therefore, will not be surprised at the strange comparison drawn by Colonel Burlton of the above operations, with those which consisted in the concentration of the military posts on the north-west frontier, prior to the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshur. On the 13th December the frontier posts of Umballa, Loodiana, Ferozepore, Kussowlic, and Subathoo, extending over a line of 150 miles, or within a radius of 75 miles, were occupied by seven troops of horse artillery, seven companies of foot artillery, ten regiments of cavalry, and twenty-three battalions of infantry,—in all amounting to, perhaps, 20,000 men, 8000 of whom were concentrated by the evening of the 18th December (within the above-mentioned radius), to fight the battle of Moodkee. On the 21st, those from the other posts had joined, and the battle of Ferozeshur was fought with 16,000 men. This concentration required only that the order to march on any specified point should be given to troops fully equipped and occupying frontier posts, especially selected with a view to the power of rapid concentration.

The reader has now some idea of the position of our out-posts at the period to which Colonel Burlton refers, and will be able to set a proper value on his boast.

"We should, on the Bengal side, have thought ourselves very slow coaches indeed, if we had required forty-four days to equip and assemble an army of 15,000 men. How would matters have looked if we had taken forty-four days to bring into the field the force which first met and drove back the Sikh invasion at Moodkee? No difficulty was experienced; they moved off, as ordered, tents, ammunition, and every thing complete."

Matters would have looked very strange, indeed, if they had experienced any difficulty in moving; and stranger still, if, within a radius of 75 miles, in which 20,000 men were posted, an army of 15,000 men could not have assembled in forty-four *hours*, not *days*! We will now look at our position in Scinde at that time (December, 1845). Although war threatened the whole north-west frontier of India, not a soldier was allowed to be moved, not a note of preparation to be heard, nor a camel to be bought; all was ordered, by the Supreme Government, to remain in Scinde, as if the profoundest tranquillity reigned upon her frontiers;—such was the policy of the time.

The announcement of the battle of Moodkee brought with it the order for the assembly of an army of 15,000 men, with siege equipment, &c., at Roree, 320 miles from the sea.

The means available to the Government of Scinde for moving a force, amounted to 1800 camels of the baggage corps (then being raised), sufficient for a column of about 3000 men.

The din of preparation now began in earnest: 10,000 men, of all arms, with guns, waggons, horses, camp-equipage, and camp-followers, were marched from various stations in the Bombay Presidency to the sea-coast, and embarked at the various ports of Western India, such as Mandavie, Surat, Bombay, and Vingorla, on every description of floating craft, from the steam frigate to the open country boat, that the untiring energy of the officers of the Indian navy could command.

It was for the promptitude with which the call for troops was responded to, the alacrity with which they were marched to the sea-ports, and the rapidity with which 10,000 men, batteries, horses, camp equipage and followers were shipped and poured into Scinde, that Sir Charles Napier took the public opportunity his pamphlet afforded of expressing his acknowledgments to Sir George Arthur, Governor of Bombay, and Sir Robert Oliver, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian navy.

In Scinde, itself, no less extraordinary exertions were made to meet the influx of troops, and move them as they arrived. The 1800 baggage corps camels soon amounted to 12,000, and, by the exertions of the officers of the baggage corps, were speedily equipped and organised for the field. All who know anything of these countries must be aware of the difficulty of procuring *carriage* for troops on an emergency, and they will understand the nature of the exertions made.

Every department of the army worked night and day. The Ordnance collected a siege train of 32 pieces, with 1000 rounds of shot and shell for every gun. The Engineers, under that most able and lamented officer, Major Peat, collected a park, which was a model for other armies, so complete was it in every essential for an army in the field, with 300 yards of bridging, collected from most inefficient sources.* The Commissariat with two months' supplies—the medical department; all were completed: 10,000 men were moved down to the different ports of Western India, embarked with all their *matériel* on a voyage varying from 500 to 800 miles, and landed in Scinde, 320 miles from the point of rendezvous at Roree, where in 42 days an army of 15,000 men, siege train,

* It is curious to observe that these hastily collected, but most complete parks mainly contributed to the relief of our troops, and the reduction of the fortress of Mooltan three years afterwards.

bridge, park, carriage, and supplies, were ready to take the field.

And here I would remind Colonel Burlton, that far from the army which won the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshur having been complete (posted as they were in detachments, within a few marches of each other, ready for the signal to concentrate and resist invasion), it is a notorious fact, that those two battles were fought with the ammunition only which were in the waggons and tumbrils of the field-batteries! Not a round of spare ammunition accompanied the army—*it was forgotten!* And the morning of the 22nd December found the British army with scarcely a round, opposed to 3000 fresh men under the Sirdar Tej Sing! Nor did a siege train make its appearance till the day before the battle of Sobraon, nearly two months *after the first battle was fought!* Colonel Burlton is, therefore, unhappy in his choice of a comparison between the concentration, by means of a few marches of the detached posts of the British army before the battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshur, and the assembly of an army and *matériel* at Roree from various distant parts of the Bombay Presidency.

No stronger mode than that of using Colonel Burlton's own words need be adopted, to show that officer's utter ignorance of the subject he has chosen to criticise. In page 25 he remarks,—

“ I have observed before, that a baggage corps system, to be useful, must be complete; that a corps of 1800 men, for instance, would be utterly useless (*'rari nantes in gurgite vasto'*) in the midst of the tumultuous and troubled sea of baggage, such as Sir Charles Napier has described. Be the army large or small, the baggage corps should be strong enough to carry the whole of its baggage; it would be bootless for it to carry a part, and this, I think, Sir Charles will allow ”

Sir Charles will, I am certain, allow nothing of the kind,

and Colonel Burlton might have known this if he had studied the plan which he professes to criticise.

Sir Charles intended the baggage corps should not exceed the peace establishment of Government transport, which might possibly be reckoned at one-third or one-fourth of what would be required in war ; that the baggage corps, with its trained men, should form a *nucleus* ; and that even should it be found necessary to quadruple the transport, an armed and trained baggage-corps man to every four hired or newly-purchased camels with untrained drivers, would be sufficient to guard, guide, and direct them.

On this subject Sir Charles Napier observes :—

“ With regard to increasing the corps when war is expected, the Government would merely make a temporary addition by

1st, Hiring camel-men ;

2nd, Purchasing more camels ;

3rd, Attaching a few more officers for the campaign. This temporary increase would be determined by the strength of the force with which it is proposed to take the field.

“ This at first appears to be an abandonment of the principle on which I formed the corps ; but it is not so ; for by attaching one hired camel-man and one camel to every regular soldier camel-driver of the corps, the hired man is *forced at once into a strict compliance with the system of the regiment*, which only requires obedience to orders,—that is to say, *discipline, not drill*.

“ Thus the baggage corps could be on an emergency quadrupled without the necessity of an increased permanent expense, for every baggage-corps soldier could easily direct three animals and their drivers,” &c.

Now, upon this grave error of Colonel Burlton's, which I have thus exposed, is based the whole fabric of his calculations (shown at page 25) of the enormous expense it would be to Government if the system of the baggage corps was introduced with large armies ; the whole of which are a collection of errors not worthy of perusal.

Colonel Burlton is clearly guilty of one of two grave

indiscretions, which a consideration of the above exhibits, and he may have his choice of them :—1st, Either he had not read or studied Sir Charles Napier's plan, so clearly laid down by him, and thus committed the unpardonable offence towards that officer and the public of making his mis-statements through ignorance; or 2ndly, He has read and understood Sir Charles Napier's pamphlet, and has purposely and grossly misrepresented the case, in order to mislead the British public, and to injure the character of the man whom they have chosen by acclamation to the post he now holds in India, for if one-tenth of Colonel Burlton's calumnies and assumptions were correct, Sir Charles Napier would merit the contempt, and not the confidence, of his countrymen.

I will not leave this subject, however, without proving Colonel Burlton wrong in every point of his argument.

He remarks upon the extravagant pay given to the Surwans,—8 rupees per mensem; he does not take into consideration that this is "*Scinde pay*,"—that the Sepoy, who in other parts of India gets 7 rupees a month, in Scinde gets 12 *rupees*, and all classes in proportion. The camel-man, among the rest, who would get only four or five rupees a month in other parts of India, in Scinde would receive 8. Why this high rate of pay was ever given to the army in Scinde, no one in that army can tell; and, what is more, no Sepoy in that army *ever expected or looked to receive* such pay. But whatever may have been the cause of this difference, the soldier of a baggage corps in the provinces of India need not receive more than five rupees, or at most 6 rupees, a month.

Government has been at *no expense* in providing the men of the Scinde baggage corps with uniforms,—the men have paid for these themselves; nor for "arms or accoutrements,"—the former were old flint muskets cut

down, and the latter selected and made up from among unserviceable lots in store : even Kubadar Moll cost the Government nothing, for he was captured at the battle of Meeanee. "Ammunition, flags, and lanterns" are necessities in war. On the whole, Colonel Burlton, in putting "the matter in this rather strong light," has put it in rather *too strong a light* for his credit, and, moreover, has *signally failed* in showing "what might be the occasional outlay incurred by the introduction of the proposed system."

Colonel Burlton, apparently forgetful of his particular side of the question, brings forward the following curious exposure of the Commissariat department upon the Ava campaign, when, by his own account,* a British force of about 3000 men undertook the subjugation of an empire, and to fight its way for 600 miles, against privation and a numerous enemy, "through a hostile country, which we knew would be desolated and deserted before us," with provisions for fifteen days, where there were not even any of the comforts of an European camp, "officers of all ranks crowding under a blanket or Lilliputian tent to shelter themselves from the meridian sun with a miserable half-starved cow or pony—the sole beast of burden of the inmate."

Assuredly Colonel Burlton's picture places the Government who dared to send forth an army thus equipped, and the General who had the indiscretion to lead it, in no enviable position. But what will the reader say as to the character of the army transport department of the time, as above described, which is the entire question under review? Must it not have been a disgrace, and a source of feebleness, suffering, and much loss of life throughout the army? The reader, of course, will imagine that Colonel

* See pp. 46 and 47.

Burlton is prepared to show that the baggage transport was in this scandalous picture conducted on Sir Charles Napier's principle! Not at all; it was the perfection of the Burltonian or "higgledy-piggledy" Commissariat principle which was then in force, has continued to the present day, and has never been swerved from, except by Sir Charles himself, to the extreme indignation of our critic.

Passing over twenty pages of Colonel Burlton's exposition of the necessities of an Indian army, and his tirade against Sir Charles Napier for suggesting reduction which he never contemplated, we come to the following admonition to Sir Charles: "I pray you not to run away with the idea that you are going to command an army whose officers will not readily and cheerfully go hand in hand with you in all things,—in hardships, in privations, or in dangers." This was probably intended to lead those unacquainted with Sir Charles Napier's sentiments towards the Indian army, to suppose that he expected to find them deficient in these qualities on his return to India. Luckily, however, we have the General's sentiments placed beyond calumny, in words which the officers of the Indian army can understand and feel. "The Indian army," he tells them, "when well commanded, is indomitable: it is capable of subjugating all the countries between the Black and Yellow Seas. The European officers are all English, Irish, and Scotch gentlemen, whose honour and courage have created in their troops such an intrepid spirit, as to render India secure against every evil from which an army can protect a country."

I will not close these remarks, however, without satisfying Colonel Burlton's insolent curiosity, "to know how he" (Sir Charles Napier) "will comport himself in regard to the princely establishment of tents which he will find ready for his accommodation in India." I will take

Colonel Burlton's own description of a Commander-in-Chief's camp equipage:—

“ Exclusive of his staff, for, in fact, his own personal accommodation, the Commander-in-Chief will find himself provided with ”—

No. and description of Tents.	Carriage for their transport.
2 dinner-tents, for 60 or 70 people . . .	8 elephants.
1 sitting ditto	8 „
—	—
Total 6	Total 16 „

Present accommodation for the Commander-in-Chief, (Head-Quarters, Camp, March 1850,) in which he has lived since 21st November, 1849 :—

No. and description of Tent.	Carriage for its transport.
1 hill-tent	1 camel.
—	—
Total 1 tent.	Total 1 „

In ordinary marches, that is, when not on actual service, the Commander-in-Chief in India has a second hill-tent, which is sent on over-night to enable him to resume his duties at once on arriving at a new encamping ground. He is not, however, singular in this extravagant luxury, as the same indulgence is accorded to every officer in his camp.

There is a sitting-tent pitched as a public waiting-tent for the accommodation of aides-de-camp, reception of officers at levees, &c., and for receiving his personal staff at dinner, &c.

See A ~~little~~ tent is accorded to the general staff for their mess, &c. They each employ two elephants for their transport.

These are the only double-poled tents in camp. They are required for public purposes, and for the accommodation of the staff at dinner, breakfast, &c.

In case Colonel Burlton or others might suppose that

Sir Charles Napier has carried reduction too far, I may add, that hill-tents, though very small, afford sufficient accommodation and shelter even for ladies, who, with children, have accompanied the camp to Peshawur, and known no other roof for four months, in very severe weather too—in cold, wet, and heat.

Colonel Burlton adverts to the enormous number of baggage animals which would be required for the Commander-in-Chief's camp, in the following words :—

“ For the carriage of this truly oriental camp, there are employed about eighty or ninety elephants, some three or four hundred camels, and nearly as many bullocks, &c., and about fifty men (get rid of these, Sir Charles, or hide your head for ever!), in the sole duty of carrying, ye gods' *glass-doors* for the tents of his Excellency ! ”

Our friend the Commissary cannot abstain, even in this trifling detail, from a certain degree of exaggeration in his statement, evidently because the costly and cumbrous equipage he was describing was in future to be for Sir Charles Napier's use ; and he probably imagined it impossible that any man could be found who would apply his general principles of curtailments to his own particular case.

I will here place before the reader the actual comparative amount of transport establishment appointed by Government for the Commander-in-Chief's camp, and that now in use with Sir Charles Napier :—

Government Allowance.		Sir C. Napier.	Remarks
Elephants	70	20	The load of one elephant is equal to those of five camels
Camels	278	334	
Bullocks	180	None.	
Tent-pitchers	310	222	
Bearers for glass-doors	16	None	
Do. for Flag Staff	6	None.	

While making comparisons, I may as well inform the

reader of a very great reduction which was effected by Sir Charles Napier in the transport of the baggage and officers of the head-quarters from Simla to the plains.

The number of coolies required for this work in former years amounted generally to about 3300, while in 1849-1850 the number required scarcely exceeded 1100. This is a reduction of great importance to the poor people of the district, as they are *forced* in the months of October and November to leave their crops at a time they are required to gather them in, and come in from a radius of about sixty miles round Simla to perform this labour.

I have sought to show that Sir Charles Napier's suggestions, for the improvement of the army baggage transport department in India, are as much required on a principle of humanity to the civil population of the country, as they are on the grounds of humanity to the soldier and efficiency in war ; but, before closing, I must give one more quotation from the Commissary, in reference to the existing principle of baggage transport :—

“ I beg,” he says, “ the reader will not suppose I mean to convey an idea that it” (the baggage) “ comes in regularly ‘ in ordine longo,’ as I have described it. On the contrary, it gets into camp as it best can, and that is, by the process vulgarly, but expressively, called ‘ helter-skelter, biggledy-piggledy, or topsy-turvy ’ ”

How this paragraph can have made its way into the Commissary Colonel's pages is absolutely marvellous.

1st. Because it is true, critically true !

2nd. Because it substantiates the facts upon which the whole of Sir Charles Napier's acts and arguments are based, as regards the transport of army baggage in India.

3rd. Because it broadly invalidates, on the Commissary's own authority, all the rest of the Commissary's vain, frivolous, and false criticisms.

The reader must really take the trouble of going once

more over this third veracious statement of the Head Camel-driver with his thirty years' experience ; and that it may be perfectly clear, the printer is hereby directed to place it before him in large Roman characters :—

“ BUT BEFORE I GO FURTHER, I BEG THE READER WILL NOT SUPPOSE I MEAN TO CONVEY AN IDEA THAT IT COMES IN REGULARLY ‘IN ORDINE LONGO,’ AS I HAVE DESCRIBED IT. ON THE CONTRARY, IT GETS INTO CAMP AS IT BEST CAN, AND THAT IS BY THE PROCESS VULGARLY, BUT EXPRESSIVELY, CALLED ‘HELTER-SKELTER, HIGGLEDY-PIGGOLEDY, OR TOPSY-TURVY.’ ”!!!!!!!

In conclusion, can the reader help me to define the reasons which have induced the Commissary to foster whilst in power, and afterwards to sustain by perverse advocacy, his “ higgledy-piggledy ” baggage principle, which every military Commander condemns as the greatest impediment in war ? Can it be that excess of *esprit de Corps* which would enrich by hook or crook head camel-drivers, even at the risk of the country's ruin ? Can it be an ardent professional love for that utter and impenetrable confusion inseparable from his “ topsy-turvy ” department, which defies all the ingenuity and energies of an auditor of public accounts ? !!!

I now take leave of my Commissary, hoping that this exposition may be the means of “ *drawing* ” him again.

APPENDIX, No. 1

Extract from Major Hough's History of the Affghan War. Recapitulation of the loss of Animals, and their value.

Public and private losses.	Elephants.	Camels died, stolen, &c.	Horses.	Ponies or Yabooks.	Bullocks.	Tents.
The Government loss in both Columns		26,700	1,564		521	(14)
Officers and Men in the Bengal Column and Shah's Force	3	2,500	20	178	83	53½
Ditto Bombay Column	...	800	9	86	19	18
Total	3	* 30,000	1,593	264	623	71½

N.B.—Making a total loss of 32,483 animals, which may be called in round numbers 33,000, in an army of about 13,000 men, including the corps left at Quetta, and without including any of the corps left in Sindh:—

The value lost by Government	£140,518
Add 418 Horses (Table, No. 1), Bombay column, medium price 450 rupees	17,810
Loss of Officers and Men, Bengal column	50,000
Ditto ditto Bombay column.	20,000
Aggregate amount	228,328
Which in round numbers is	£229,000

APPENDIX, No 2

(Extract from Brigadier Wallace's Letter to Sir Charles Napier.)

CAMP FURRACHAND,
31st December, 1842.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I marched this morning to this place. We had four or five hours' incessant rain, and an immense number of camels are floored on the road. . . . When we crossed the river Indus on the 1st December, there were about 500 camels. . . . It is now 2 P.M., and a great portion of the baggage has not yet reached camp, and it is difficult to say when it will, the roads are in such a state now from the late rain. For the hired camels, I am sorry to say the men *will not go*. They agreed in the morning to get the number of camels we required to go back; but in the evening the camel-men came to Captain Dallas, and declared most positively that they *would not* go to the southward. This change took place from reports being circulated in the country that the Ameers intended to hold out, and they should lose their camels (thinking we should be defeated). Every means was used to persuade them to go, but as yet it has been of no avail. . . . 200 camels *must*, somehow or other, be got to enable this detachment to move. Both Dallas and myself will do all in our power to do as you wish, and to get the troops off when the weather clears up

APPENDIX, No. 3

(Extract from General England's Letter to Sir Charles Napier.)

CAMP QUETTA,
20th September, 1842.

You will have been made aware of the doubtful conduct of the Ameers of Scinde, of their desire to strike if they dare, and of their wish to incite the Belooches, and, indeed, all the tribes hereabout under our

route, to molest us in every possible way. There is no doubt of our being so far *at the mercy of the people here to require their camels*, and to the present moment they are freely given to us on hire; but if the Ameers had time to spread abroad their inducements to the Brahooees, and thus prevent us from obtaining, on this ground, the *requisite carriage* for our force, we might be subject to some difficulty, not having 1000 Government camels forthcoming.

(Extract 2.)

THE difficulty of carriage for our sick, and the rascality of all Brahooee contractors for such assistance, have been my *chief difficulties* in this march.

(Extract 3.)

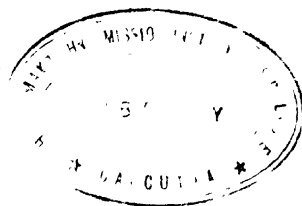
BAGH,
17th October, 1842.

WE lost upwards of 200 camels at Dadur, but I shall pause on the subject of compensation for them till it can be quite proved that there has been no collusion between the contractors and the robbers [*i. e.* the enemy]; *no uncommon case!* Our sick is not increasing, but we have still one man in seven to carry.

APPENDIX, No. 4.

THE facts relating to the loss of the 14th Dragoons on their march to Lahore, (which I have since obtained officially,) are much worse than I was aware of. Out of 341 British dragoons, 115 *were stricken between the evening of the 11th and morning of the 18th of August, 1848*, of whom 14 died outright, "*from exposure in crowded tents during the day!*" On the arrival of the wing at Lahore, the sick "*amounted to upwards of 200, or about one-third of the whole strength of the regiment!!*"

THE END.



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